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THE UNDERTOW

BY

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CHAPTER I.

THE question was about Dorothy's swimming. "She should have learned long before!" said Mrs. Byrnes indignantly. "All girls nowadays know how to do everything—swim, sail, ride, run their own cars—and most of them fence or box, too. I must say, Sarah, I think Dorothy's education has been *sadly* neglected."

Mrs. Byrnes was Dorothy's aunt, and Sarah was Dorothy's mother. These two sisters had a family resemblance. They were both fresh-colored, blonde, handsome women, tall and dignified, prosperous and well-dressed. Mrs. Byrnes, the younger, had more curves as to figure and also as to mind. She was inclined to be social, while Mrs. Forsyth was merely domestic. Both were able, within their respective lines.

Mrs. Byrnes had arrived that afternoon, motoring down from New York to the shore, and already while partaking of tea on the veranda her well-known power of initiative had come into action. Mrs. Forsyth had no initiative outside of her house, or houses. She now looked perfectly placid and neutral.

"You know Dorothy has always been delicate," she remarked.

"Delicate!" cried Mrs. Byrnes. "Of course she has—kept like a hot-house flower, and a nervous specialist at every turn! If she had had a modern outdoor training——"

"I have always had the best doctors and followed their advice," said Mrs. Forsyth calmly.

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"Followed their advice, yes, but you have to use your common-sense too," retorted Mrs. Byrnes warmly.

Mrs. Byrnes always lost her temper with her sister, who never lost hers, but who had a perfect mild obstinacy, as easy to make a lasting impression upon as a feather pillow.

Meantime the subject of this conversation sat between the two sisters, on the low railing of the veranda, looking abstractedly out to sea, and swinging a slim foot with a white pump partly on and partly off it. Dorothy was not at all like her mother or her aunt. A totally different strain had come in here, with marked results. She was not so tall, she was slender as a reed, with small bones, a small head and face, a cloud of dark hair, and deep-set, narrow blue eyes. She was pale, but her shadowed eyes were very bright. She had style. She wore her plain and expensive clothes as though she had not given them a thought. There was grace about her, but no obvious coquetry.

Mrs. Byrnes, on the contrary, was distinctly coquettish, from the long pearl drops in her ears to her shoes and stockings. She was admirably groomed, and had a kind of gloss about her. You could not miss seeing that she was perfectly and elaborately turned out. Mrs. Forsyth again was merely immaculate, sober, and costly.

"As to Dorothy's learning to swim," said the latter, after carefully counting the stitches in a bit of lace she was making, "I am perfectly willing. Only, I think she ought to learn in the swimming-pool at the Casino, and not in the ocean."

Dorothy's blue eyes were following the rise and fall of the surf a hundred feet away. There was a strong breeze off the sea, and the waves rolled in gloriously and crashed in a wide welter of foam.

"I will not learn in the pool," said Dorothy. Her voice was low and tired, and the wind blew the words from her lips.

"What did you say?" asked Mrs. Byrnes, bending her stiffly-corseted figure forward a little.

"I said," repeated Dorothy, turning toward her aunt, "that if I swim at all, I'll swim in the sea. Not in the pool."

"But why not the pool—just to learn in?" coaxed Mrs. Byrnes, glancing at her sister. She glanced away because Dorothy was now looking straight at her, and Dorothy's eyes always made her uncomfortable. She would say to herself, with unpleasant feelings, "There's something morbid about that girl."

Dorothy's sharply-cut lips curled. "Because it's messy—always full of people. And it's stagnant," she said.

"Why, you know they change the water every morning," protested Mrs. Forsyth.

"And I'm sure none but very nice people go in there," supported Mrs. Byrnes.

Dorothy looked at her mother, then at her aunt, and got up off the railing.

"I'm going down to the beach for an hour," she said in her tired voice.

"George may be here any minute now," Mrs. Byrnes suggested.

"Shall I send him down——"

"No!" said Dorothy, with extreme positiveness. "Keep him right here."

And she went slowly down, across the velvet lawn, across the broad avenue, a highway for motors, and disappeared beyond the board-walk.

Mrs. Byrnes looked at her sister, whose eyes were on her lace-work, and who was patiently counting stitches.

"Sarah, is anything wrong between Dorothy and George Clayborne?" she asked sharply.

Mrs. Forsyth finished counting her stitches before replying.

"Wrong? Why, no, Milly. Not that I know of."

"Well, Sarah, you would n't know if there was! Did you hear what Dorothy said just now?"

"Certainly I heard it," said Mrs. Forsyth, with dignity. "I think Dorothy is perfectly right in not wishing to be very much alone with Mr. Clayborne until she has made up her mind about marrying him."

Mrs. Byrnes bestowed upon her sister, who was quite oblivious to it, a look of utter contempt.

"Sarah, you know no more about human beings than the man in the moon," she said. "I don't believe you have any more idea of what is going on in Dorothy's mind——"

At this, Mrs. Forsyth's color deepened slightly, and her lips, for a moment, shut tight together.

"I don't believe you have, either, Milly," she remarked coldly.

"No, but if I were her mother, I would have! I don't pretend to understand Dorothy, but I know something of human nature, and——"

"Well, if you had ever had any children, Milly," observed Mrs. Forsyth, "you would know that it is n't so easy to know what is in their minds, unless they've a mind to tell you."

"Oh, well, it's useless to talk to you, Sarah! You would n't interfere if Dorothy wanted to walk off the end of the pier on a dark night."

"I really don't know why you should take that tone, Milly——"

"Well, Sarah, you would n't lift your little finger to help George Clayborne, and I consider that it's really a wonderful chance for Dorothy. Just think, *everything*—an only son, inheriting a business worth *millions*, and the town-house all ready for her, as Mrs. Clayborne wants to live abroad—all Mrs. Clayborne's friends to help Dorothy on socially—and a most excellent young man and madly in love with her—I really do *think*, Sarah, that you should care enough about the child's future to——"

"Now, Milly, once for all," said Mrs. Forsyth evenly, rolling up her

lace, "I don't wish you to talk to me like this again. In the first place, I have no influence with Dorothy. She does n't care a button for what I say, nor for what you say, nor, so far as I know, for what anybody says. Dorothy is, and always has been, a most peculiar child. She has never given me her confidence, as you know perfectly well. If you think *you* can talk her into marrying Mr. Clayborne, you are perfectly welcome to try it. But it will be far more apt to set her completely against him. And I for one would certainly never urge Dorothy to marry any one, whether he had millions or not. If she *wants* to marry him, I would not oppose it. I think a girl must decide for herself."

Finishing this unwontedly long speech, Mrs. Forsyth rose, with her usual stateliness.

"Excuse me, Milly, I have a letter to write. I hope you will make yourself perfectly comfortable, and when Mr. Clayborne comes ring for some fresh tea."

"Thank you, I will," said Mrs. Byrnes tartly.

She sat tapping her high-heeled shoe on the floor with impotent vexation. To her managing mind, a mother like Sarah was a pitiable spectacle and really immoral. No wonder Dorothy was peculiar! No direction, no discipline, no forming influence! A mother to confess blandly that she had no influence with her child! . . .

When George Clayborne arrived, as he did within five minutes, leaping out of the motor with a bright, eager, expectant look, Mrs. Byrnes received him, for her, funereally.

"Well, George," she said. "Sit down and make the best of it, and have tea with me."

"With great pleasure," said the young man, depositing a large, square, florist's box beside his chair, and continuing to look eagerly down the broad veranda and into the dim vista of the long hall.

"Orchids?" said Mrs. Byrnes. "If you're looking for Dorothy, she is n't here. She'll be back some time. Mrs. Forsyth is writing a letter and will be down presently. Just touch the bell there, will you, and order whatever refreshment you like?"

"Thanks, I don't want anything," said Clayborne, rather crestfallen.

He was a tall young man, in his thirties, just verging on the floridity and stoutness of middle age, his blond hair beginning to thin on the temples and over the forehead. He had a firm, passionate mouth, and gray eyes that looked now wistful and pathetic as a disappointed child's.

"Where is Dorothy?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know. Just wandered off. She said we were to keep you till she got back."

"Oh, you can keep me, all right," murmured George ruefully. "But she knew I was coming on this train."

"Of course she knew it. . . . I wish, George," said Mrs. Byrnes

abruptly, "that you did n't care quite so *much* about Dorothy—or, at least, did n't let her see it so plainly——"

"Oh, Lord! how can I help it?" protested the suitor. "I'm perfectly smashed up, crazy about her, and I can't hide it any more than I can stop breathing! . . . If you mean I ought to play some kind of a game with her—I can't, that's all. I've never been in love before, and I'm madly in love with her—and she'll just have to take me or leave me on that basis. . . ." He lit a cigarette nervously, and said with a forlorn appeal: "You don't think I have much chance, do you? You don't think she cares a hang. . . . ?"

"Oh, I don't know, George," said Mrs. Byrnes. "I can't make her out. I know that if I were her mother, she'd turn my hair gray in no time. I think she's the most exasperating, provoking——"

"Oh, well, perhaps she is," said George, with some irritation. "But," he added grimly, "she's the one I want, whatever she is——"

Mrs. Byrnes sighed impatiently.

"You're too good to her. You'd let her make a door-mat of you, if she wanted to. You know, if you want my opinion, that is *not* the way to impress a girl like Dorothy."

"I can't help it," said the lover sombrely. "I've tried staying away, but I can't. I can't pretend with her—can't pretend that it makes no difference to me whether she marries me or not, for, in fact—you know"—he laughed a little, lamentably—"I really don't know what will become of me, if she won't!"

CHAPTER II.

DOROTHY walked along the firm edge of the sand, looking out to sea, where a reflection of the sunset tinged pink the water and the sky. For some time now she had not missed this hour on the beach. The board-walk was crowded with people, most of them women elaborately dressed. A band played gayly in one of the pavilions. A few bathers were dipping in the surf. It was just past high-tide, and the crest of the waves glittered full of color. Dorothy seated herself on a log of drift-wood, and waited quietly, now glancing at the sea, now along the board-walk, with a barely perceptible turn of her head. Her narrow, far-sighted eyes presently saw, some distance up the walls, what she was waiting for—a gleam of scarlet—and immobile she watched its approach.

Through the midst of the polite, chattering crowd a man came walking, with a vigorous and light step. His powerful legs and arms were bare, and sunburned to an even, smooth red-brown. He wore a light red bathing-suit, softened by sun and salt-water to a color almost matching his skin. His head, joined by a short neck to broad shoulders, was covered with thick, close-cut curls, red-blond in color. He walked with the firm, pleasant swing of disciplined muscles. He was startling in the midst of

that parade of artificial luxury. He was beautiful, bathed in the glow of the sunset and the sea.

The girl, sitting on the drift-wood log, remnant of some boat beaten to pieces by the waves, continued to watch with narrowed eyes until he was almost abreast of her. Then she rose and began to walk down the beach. This was in order that she might watch him till he was out of sight, without obviously turning to do so. As he passed her, walking now on the edge of the board-walk, he turned his head and looked down, and his eyes—clear, light blue eyes under a low brow—met Dorothy's in a brief, grave glance. He went on without hesitating, and she, strolling slowly along the sand, watched him go, a bright gleam of golden-red color among shadows. He disappeared at the far end of the walk.

She continued to stroll after he had vanished. The brilliance of the sunset had faded, but the sea was a wonderful brew of all colors, infinitely soft, liquidly inviting. Dorothy wandered and dreamed.

She knew all that could be learned from observation about that man. He was a life-guard on duty at the Casino during the bathing-hours. He was accustomed to spend those hours lying in the shade of the board-walk or in the lee of a life-boat, on that section of the beach reserved, together with a corresponding roped-off portion of the sea, for the elect members of the club. So far, during the month that he had been under Dorothy's notice, no one had needed to be rescued. But the shore was a dangerous one, the undertow powerful and treacherous. He kept a watchful eye on the swimmers. But he often had a book, too. Passing near him, she had tried to see what he was reading, but in vain. At the close of the bathing-hours he would leave his station and walk down to the swimming-pool at the end of the board-walk. Dorothy was as a rule alone on the beach at this time. She had never spoken to him, never heard his voice. But he was aware of her presence, as she of his. That quick meeting of the eyes was an almost daily event. And to Dorothy just now it was the only event that mattered.

The intense pleasure crowded for her into these few minutes daily might partly be explained thus: she was a creature of the keenest æsthetic sensibility, with nerves all quivering and alive to the sight of beauty. And this man was beautiful, a classic statue in flesh and blood, a living being brilliant as a Pompeian frieze. He fitted the beauty of the sea and shore, marred as this was by so much of the trivial round of life that she hated. She had once or twice seen him walking in the edge of the surf, glowing against the blue-green water. To her he was like poetry, like music—like the sweep of the wind, the roll of the waves. . . .

Dorothy returned to the house at the dinner-hour, to find her aunt, rustling in fresh silks, on the porch, and George Clayborne beside her, his blond face looking pink above his white shirt-front.

"Dorothy, where have you been?" demanded Mrs. Byrnes, scanning Dorothy's face and noting her hair, dishevelled and whipped into strings by the wind.

"Down on the beach," said Dorothy serenely. "How do, George? Dinner ready, Auntie?"

"As soon as your father comes down. His train was late. But you won't have time to dress," said Mrs. Byrnes.

"I know it. Just to brush my hair," and with a smile and nod at George, Dorothy escaped up the stairs.

She appeared at dinner ten minutes later, with her hair in its usual simple order, and in the severe white dress she had worn all day. George Clayborne thought her perfectly dressed, as always. That blouse with its dashing plain lines, its open broad collar showing her lovely throat—could anything be more charming? Mrs. Forsyth, in a majestic robe of white embroidered crêpe, seating herself at the round, richly-furnished table, had George at her right hand. Then came Mrs. Byrnes, in pink taffeta, then Mr. Forsyth, and Dorothy sat between her father and her mother, and opposite the adoring eyes of George. A butler and a parlor-maid served.

The conversation was sustained mainly by Mr. Forsyth and George, with an occasional brisk remark from Mrs. Byrnes, and dealt with business and politics. Mrs. Forsyth listened with mild interest. Dorothy did not listen at all, but pursued her own thoughts, smiling absently at George when her eyes met his.

George, as became an aspirant, was extremely deferential to Mr. Forsyth, and Mr. Forsyth showed as much friendliness to George as was consistent with his impassive face and inexpressive manner. His were blue, deep-set eyes, like Dorothy's, and with the same fire in them, more hidden than in hers by heavy, drooping lids. He was a silent and intense man, and for twenty-two years his life had run side by side with that of his placid wife, and the two had never once really mingled. Mrs. Forsyth "never interfered" in her husband's affairs. She knew nothing about them. She had not so much as a suspicion that her husband—so regular in his habits, so kind and generous to her, never touching intoxicating drink, nor even smoking—that this model man was a desperate gambler, his business constantly involved, freeing himself by luck or sleight-of-hand, for years on the brink of catastrophe. Mr. Forsyth wished to make his respectable capital a fortune, and, besides, he speculated for the pleasure of the game. That was the exciting and temperamental part of his life. That was his real life.

No one of his family had an inkling of this—not even the shrewd Mrs. Byrnes, or she would hastily have withdrawn the considerable funds she had invested under his direction. George, however, knew a great deal and suspected more. The knowledge that Mr. Forsyth might ruin him—

self at any moment did not affect George's attitude in the least—except that, looking at Dorothy, he wished that she were penniless, so that he might be able to take care of her completely. And at this thought tears of tenderness came into his eyes, for he was subject to the lapses of mind that all lovers know. And Dorothy, beholding his eyes suffused with tears, colored with annoyance, turned her head away, and refused to look at him again during dinner.

CHAPTER III.

SHE knew, however, that she could not escape a talk with him; and, indeed, she had something to say, unpleasant but necessary. After dinner Mr. Forsyth retired to the library, in company with a sheaf of documents which occupied him for the rest of the evening. Some visitors came for Mrs. Forsyth, and Mrs. Byrnes joined this group at one end of the veranda. Dorothy and George Clayborne were left to themselves. Dorothy had received the orchids, as she did the homage of George's attitude toward her, rather suffering than accepting. But when they were alone she began to speak directly.

"I am sorry you brought me those orchids," she said.

"Why, Dorothy?" he asked in a low voice. "Don't you like them?"

"I don't like any cut flowers out of a florist's shop," she explained, in a preoccupied way. "And particularly I don't like orchids, because they are just the most expensive and fragile. And, besides, they are not pretty. A daisy out of a field is prettier. And I hate all that costly and useless kind of thing."

"I'm sorry," murmured George. "But somehow those pink orchids always make me think of you—they're so delicate and fine. You're not a bit like a daisy in a field!"

But Dorothy was leading up by means of the orchids to something that she wanted to get said as quickly as possible.

"It hurts me," she said gravely, "to have you give me things that——"

"That you don't want," he supplied in a pained tone. "I wish—I only wish I could give you something that you *do* want. Is there anything you *do* want, Dorothy?"

"Yes, oh, yes—but not what anybody can give me. People have always been giving me things. I want to get something for myself."

"Well, dear, what sort of thing?"

"Why—a different sort of life, to begin with. I want to be free—and not live in this stupid kind of comfort. I'm bored to death with it. I want to work."

"How work, Dorothy?"

"I want to do some kind of hard work. There are several things I've thought of. But I'd have to go away from home, by myself, and I know I shall have an awful time getting away."

George was silent for some moments, and then he spoke as to a loved, unreasonable child.

"Dorothy dear, you don't know what hard work means. How could you go away from home, alone? How could you take care of yourself?"

Dorothy clenched her fist and struck the arm of her chair a sharp blow.

"That's it! That's the way you all talk to me! I knew it. . . .

I tell you what you'll drive me to: I shall *run* away—you'll see!"

"Oh, Dorothy, dearest——"

"Yes, it's always 'Oh, Dorothy'! . . . Ever since I can remember, when I was a tiny child: 'Oh, Dorothy, don't do that, don't go there, you'll muss your nice white dress and get your shoes dirty'! And when I was bigger, it was: 'I would n't play with those children, dear. They have n't nice manners, and their parents are very common'! . . . And then when I wanted to work really hard at my drawing: 'Oh, Dorothy, the doctor says you must *not* work more than an hour a day or you will break down'—and, of course, I broke down! . . . I know I'm a weak thing, George, or I would have taken my own way long ago, and it's because I'm weak that I've been so unhappy. But it's got to the point now where I *must* take it. . . . And of course I know you'll all come running to prevent me. Mother will forget her housekeeping, and Father his business, and Aunt her schemes, long enough to try to smother poor Dorothy back into the nest of cotton-wool! And even you, George! Yes, you're just like the rest, just the same protecting, negative attitude! Orchids! Oh, yes, all the orchids I want, and all the other things—only, I don't want them. . . . All my family wants is to keep me quiet until I can get married and then hand the job over to my husband. And you feel just the same way—indulgent and kind and patient with all my tempers and whims. And now won't Dorothy be a good child and there's a lovely surprise for her, a box of candy or a picture-book——"

"Oh, I say, Dorothy!" George interrupted this nervous torrent of words, but she bore him down.

"No matter *what* I want to do. It's a tradition now in my family that whatever I want to do is wrong. . . . Why, see here—I'm just learning to swim, and I want to swim in the open, and my whole family unite in a shout of protest: 'Dorothy to the pool!' If you only knew how typical that is! You would all be so glad if you could shut me in four walls forever!"

"Now, look here, Dorothy, you're unjust!" cried George forcibly enough to get a hearing this time. "Take your typical instance of the pool: You're a beginner, and you'd never be a very strong swimmer, any way, and this is a dangerous coast, with an undertow, by Jove! that could drown *me*, if I did n't look out. Your family is perfectly right, confound it! And it's exactly the same about your idea of getting away

from home. Of course, if they knew it, they'd oppose it. The trouble is, you don't know anything about the dangers you want to run into. You——"

"You talk like a grandfather, George."

"That's right, make fun of me, if you want to. I tell you, Dorothy, I'll take you out to-morrow morning—I'll take you anywhere you want. And you'll be safe with me."

"Yes, that's what you think—I'll be safe with you!"

"Well, I *do* want to take care of you, if that's a crime——"

"It's worse, a mistake. . . . Can't you realize, George, that I don't *want* to be taken care of, I don't *want* to be safe?"

She stood upright against the pale sky, her whole eager young figure, the clear, beautiful lines of her head, so full of life, so instinct with charm! The man beside her, overcome with a passionate desire to seize her in his arms, bowed his head with a moan. She moved slightly away from him, and said sharply:

"George, it will never be that way. . . . I am never going to marry you. I can't let you go on thinking I may. I never shall."

He sprang up.

"You never said it in that way before! Dorothy!"

"I've told you so before——"

"But never that way! Dorothy—so long as there is n't anybody else—if there is, you ought to tell me——"

"And you ought n't to ask, it seems to me. . . . It's enough that I know I never can marry you——"

"No, it's not enough!"

He came quite close to her, and his hand closed tight on her slim wrist.

"Tell me that you care for somebody else," he said imperiously, thickly, "and I'll never trouble you again. I'll be off."

"You're hurting my arm," said Dorothy. "No, I won't tell you that."

"You want to keep me in suspense, in misery——"

"I don't want to keep you at all. Let me go."

A sudden sob lifted his breast.

"God, how cruel you are! You're perfectly heartless! What a fool I am to care for you! Useless suffering! But I'm done with it. Yes, I'm done. I won't come back again—I'll go to-morrow—to-night—and that's the end."

He turned away and rushed down the steps and off toward the sea.

Dorothy went up to her room, undressed, and lay down in the dark. She lay there for hours, gazing with wide-open eyes into the darkness, listening to the fall of the waves on the sand. At first she thought about George, wincing at what he had said to her, and at his suffering. That could n't be helped. She *was* heartless, for him—she could n't give him

what he wanted. But she had told him so from the first, only he would n't take no for an answer. He had said that even if she would n't marry him, there was no reason why they should n't see each other and be good friends; and there was no reason for shutting the door on him. At the same time, she had known perfectly well that he was hoping, waiting for her to come round. So long as there was no one else, it was always possible; that had been his feeling. . . .

She hoped now that he would really go, that it would end. And it must end now, for she meant to begin a new life. . . .

Strange—her new feeling that life could be joy! She had but begun to live. It was almost too vague to find expression even to herself, and yet it was the most real thing that had ever happened to her. It was like the opening of great doors on a radiant landscape. It was like the sudden flooding of the sun into a dull day. It was like the rush of a great wind, sweeping the mists before it. . . . The world was vast and beautiful. One's spirit could move in it as sometimes in dreams, light as air, quick as a flash of light. . . . This earth could be as unearthly fair as the magic country, islands, lakes, and mountains, that you see in a cloudy golden sunset. . . .

Dreaming open-eyed for hours, she drifted off at last into sleep.

In the morning she found a note slipped under her door:

Forgive me, Dorothy, I was crazy last night. Honestly, I won't act like that again. I want to stay over to-morrow, just to prove to you that I really do care more for your happiness than for anything else in the world. Leaving me out of the question, if there's anything I can ever do for you, it would make me happy.

Dorothy sighed as she tore up the blotted page.

CHAPTER IV.

THE tide was past the full, and going out. In the early sparkling morning there were more bathers than Dorothy had counted on.

"I thought we should be the only ones!" she said with laughing petulance to George. "I thought we'd have the sea all to ourselves!"

George was radiant. To be awakened by a note of forgiveness, an invitation to a before-breakfast swim, "an escapade," as Dorothy put it—what happiness!

She flung off her long wrap and stood a slim, trim little figure in her blue satin bathing-dress and scarlet cap.

"Come on!" she cried, with hardly a glance at him.

She threw up her arms and plunged head-foremost into a curling breaker, to emerge, blinded and tingling with the shock, but only waist-deep, on the other side.

"Well, you're not afraid of the water, any way!" shouted George, coming up beside her. "Wow, but it's cold! Storm at sea yesterday. You can't stay in long."

"I'm not cold. Now I'm going to swim. No, keep away. I'm perfectly all right——"

And she launched out with a nervous, quick stroke, her slender body rising and falling on the waves.

"Careful!" cried George, keeping beside her. "Don't get out of your depth."

He swam beyond and around her.

"Keep inshore!" he insisted, turning his head and his eyes, blinking from the salt water, anxiously toward Dorothy.

She swam on, her chin under water, striking out vigorously with her slim arms and legs. A new and glorious sensation possessed her. For the first time she felt at ease in the water. She was buoyant, floating light as a feather, free and confident. The delicious freshness of the water, the large force of the waves bearing her up, floating her like a supple, swaying weed on the surface, the flash of the white foam, gave her a wonderful feeling of strength and life. She lifted her head to cry joyously:

"It's splendid!"

Then she lost the stroke, her body began to sink, her head went down under water. She felt a nervous arm suddenly clasp her round and lift her—and came to her feet, her head just clearing the surface. George half lifted, half dragged her further in.

"I'm all right!" she cried, resisting, shaking her head to get the water out of her eyes. "Why, I was n't out of my depth even!" There was disappointment in her voice.

"Well, you don't want to get out of your depth!" shouted George. "The tide's running strong."

She waded in and dropped down on the sand, breathing fast and smiling.

"That was good!" she cried. "Only, I wish you would n't be so fussy. I was having a beautiful time——"

She looked out at the heaving, flashing plane of the sea, dazzling under the morning sun. A few women were dipping up and down in the breakers near the shore, holding to the life-lines. Farther out a man was swimming strongly, his head visible now and then as a dark spot on the crest of a wave.

George crouched beside her on the sand, shivering.

"Well—have n't you had enough for this time?" he asked, his teeth chattering.

"Oh, no—I must go in once more. Are you cold? I'm as warm as toast!"

She stretched out her white arms, all her slim body vibrating with pleasure. Her head, with the red cap a little askew, and a tress of black hair escaping flattened down against her cheek, looked like a child's. Her eyes, bright blue in the sun, half-closed, smiled joyously.

"Let me go in alone this time!" she coaxed. "I don't want to drag you in, if you're cold—just ten minutes longer——"

"Come on, then," said George heroically.

He took her by the hand and they raced in together.

For the first few moments Dorothy recaptured the same feeling of buoyant well-being. She swam out, meeting the rise of the breakers, seeing nothing about her but the swell of the blue-green water, the white gulls swooping down over it, hearing only the rush of the water and the wind. Suddenly she had a feeling of being alone and of being far beyond her depth. Undoubtedly George was there, close behind her, but she could not see nor hear him, and for the moment she did not want to. She was swimming easily, sure of herself. Presently she would turn, but not just now. . . .

The stroke became a little more difficult. She began to feel tired a little. Rising on the top of a wave, she turned her head and glanced back. She could not see any one near her. She heard a stifled shout, and turned to the other side. There was George, a little distance behind her, his face showing pallid. He shouted again. Could n't he overtake her? . . . Well, then, she must turn. . . . She began to feel that she had gone far enough.

But when she wanted to turn and swim back, she could not do it. . . . No, she could not turn and make head against the tide. . . . To swim had become very difficult. She had a moment of fright. Then, summoning all her strength, she turned and struck out. She could see at moments George's face, but it seemed farther from her now. She could see the yellow line of the beach, but indistinctly. That too seemed far off, farther off. . . .

Suddenly she felt that she was being dragged out. There below in the water was a terrific force that had hold of her and was pulling her out to sea. She struggled with all her strength. But in terror she felt that it was vain. She was being pulled down from the bright surface into the depths.

She cried out once, a sharp cry suddenly stifled, for she felt herself sinking. . . . It seemed a long time of terror and of struggle in the dark choking depths. . . . Then came a great confused flash of light. She felt something near her, something that she could grasp, and frantically she clutched at it. . . . Then struggle again . . . a desperate struggle to hold fast something that would escape . . . and darkness. . . .

CHAPTER V.

Two days later Dorothy, dressed and escorted downstairs by a trained nurse, was tucked up in a long chair on the veranda and surrounded by a family which had been badly frightened and was now correspondingly reproachful. There was George too, quite pale and shaky. A bare escape from drowning had not improved the state of his nerves. It was otherwise with Dorothy. She had an unusual color and looked pensively radiant. She was full of genuine penitence and solicitude for George, who, however, seemed uncommonly gloomy. But she took rather lightly the remark of her mother and her aunt.

"All very well," growled Mr. Forsyth, who was enduring his Sabbath sentence of repose, "but I can tell you it was a narrow squeak. If that fellow had n't happened to be swimming out there——" He paused, folding his Sunday paper and frowning at it.

"Yes?" said Dorothy. "So he pulled us in, did he?"

"Yes, but you'd nearly drowned George before he could get to you. Got him tight round the neck. The guard got you off and kept you both up till they could run out the boat. Don't know how he managed it. He must have the strength of a horse."

"Poor George!" murmured Dorothy. "Will you *please* forgive me?"

He met her bright glance with rather a forced smile.

"Oh, it would n't have mattered much anyhow," he said listlessly.

Mr. Forsyth looked keenly at the young man over the top of his paper, and observed: "Well, it would have mattered some to me."

"Oh, of course—Dorothy. But I meant about me," George said heavily.

"Well, you too. . . . I felt pretty grateful to that guard. I went and hunted him up last night."

Dorothy turned her bright eyes on her father's face.

"Yes," meditated Mr. Forsyth. "I offered him a hundred dollars, but, do you know, he would n't take it. Said that was his job, anyhow, and he was well enough paid for it. I asked him what he got, and he said sixty a month. I asked him if he wanted anything else in the line of a job, and he said no, he had one in the winter-time as athletic instructor in a school. I gave him my card and told him to look me up if he ever wanted anything, and he thanked me politely. I took down his name and address. . . . Quite a superior fellow."

"What *was* his name?" asked Dorothy.

"Why, it was Robinson, I think."

Mr. Forsyth took out his notebook and flipped over the pages.

"No—Robertson, Duncan Robertson. He talks like an Englishman. I see I have n't got any address down—I remember now I asked him for it, but he said it did n't matter."

"I think we ought to go and thank him, don't you, George?" said Dorothy lightly.

"Yes, I think you should," agreed Mrs. Forsyth. "Especially as he would n't take any money."

"Remember not to offer him any," said Dorothy gravely, her brilliant eyes smiling at George.

"I don't feel inclined to reward him for saving my life," George said moodily, "or to thank him either. But I'll do it as a matter of form, if you like."

"I *do* like," Dorothy responded vigorously. "Don't talk like a child, George. Nobody wants to be drowned. I'm sure I'm extremely obliged to him."

She glanced at the warm blue of the sea under the cloudless afternoon sky, and got out of her chair.

"Come on, we might as well do it now," she said, smiling. "He'll be up there on the beach by the life-boat."

Mrs. Byrnes, who for some reason had sat silent and looking displeased during this conversation, now inquired coldly:

"Do you think you ought to walk out in the hot sun?"

"Oh, it is n't very hot," Dorothy said carelessly. "Besides, I'm perfectly well."

She went into the hall, put on a broad white hat, and took a parasol. She was wearing a pale-pink linen dress, and she had never looked prettier. She laughed at George as he walked gloomily by her side across the boulevard and down the board-walk.

"Don't be Byronic—it is n't your style," she said. "It's nonsense pretending you'd have liked to be drowned."

"Honestly, I should n't have minded," George assured her. "I don't see what I have to live for."

"Oh, stuff! Life itself—life is enough!"

"Is it?" he muttered.

She laughed and walked on lightly. They came to a flight of steps leading down to the beach. Dorothy descended slowly. There was the life-boat, drawn high up on the sand, and beside it, half in the shade of the board-walk, the guard. He was lying on an old steamer-rug, of a mottled tawny-brown, his head on his arms, his face hidden. He did not move as they approached, nor until Dorothy spoke his name clearly. Then he sat up and looked at them gravely, but did not rise.

"We must have made you a lot of trouble," said Dorothy. "I did, rather. I'm sorry I lost my head."

"You should n't have gone out so far," said the life-guard, and his steady blue eyes turned from her face to George's. "It's no place for women to swim. Two or three men get drowned here every year."

His voice was low, rather husky and veiled in quality; his speech curt

and brusque, with the accent Mr. Forsyth had noticed. His face was almost as expressionless as that of an antique statue, where all the expression is in the lines of the body. It was a conventionally modelled face, on classic lines, but by no means the purest; there was something of the heaviness of the decadence about it. But it was an uncommon and a handsome face. His age must have been close on forty.

Dorothy sat down on the edge of the rug and looked at him simply; George remained rather awkwardly standing.

"It was my fault," she said. "I was sure I could manage. Were you in any danger?"

"I? Oh, no." He smiled slightly. "Of course I could have let you both go if the boat had n't come in time. But we were pulled out quite a distance. There's a good bit of undertow."

"We came to thank you," said Dorothy, and glanced up at George, who said stiffly:

"Sorry we gave you so much trouble."

"Don't mention it—that's my business," the life-guard answered. "Of course, though, it was out of bathing-hours. It was just a chance that I happened to be out. Otherwise——"

He was looking steadily at Dorothy, watching her speculatively, expectantly, coolly. The color had deepened and burned hotly in her cheeks.

"Better take it in hours next time," he said. "And keep close to the lines."

"I don't believe she'll take any more risks," George advanced, with a note of authority which Dorothy instinctively and instantly denied.

"Of course I shall," she said calmly. "But not with you. I shan't risk *your* life again."

"But you'll risk your own, is that the idea?" inquired the guard.

"One has to take some risks," said Dorothy. "Otherwise life is n't worth having."

"Oh, if you just want the excitement of it——" he shrugged.

"No, it isn't just that, it's more than that. I can't tell you exactly——"

She was looking at him intently, without self-consciousness. But she was aware that George moved impatiently near her, and she broke off and rose to her feet.

"I'll tell you some other time," she added clearly.

He got up too, took her offered hand, and held it in a close grasp for a moment. Then he returned George's nod, and as they moved away flung himself down on his rug again and once more buried his face on his arms.

"You were n't very gracious," said Dorothy coldly to George.

"Well, you were enough so for two," he retorted. "I don't see why you needed to flirt with the fellow."

"Oh, I was n't flirting," she said indifferently.

CHAPTER VI.

BUT an impression, a definite suspicion, had been left in George's mind—a mind already prepared for passionate jealousy. A word from him, escaping him as though against his will, put Mrs. Byrnes on the alert. There was nothing, to *her* mind, incredible or preposterous in his idea. Dorothy, she would have said bitterly, was exactly the sort of girl to get into a low entanglement. She said nothing to Dorothy's mother, but, in George's absence, she watched as keenly as though her own interests had been involved—as, in fact, to some extent they were. She liked George, found him useful, and wanted Dorothy to marry him; and she most strenuously objected to Dorothy's doing anything to disgrace the family.

Meantime, quite unaware, Dorothy proceeded on her destined course. Mrs. Byrnes's judgment of her was correct as to the facts: Given her character and temperament, it was inevitable that she should break through the restraints put upon her, inevitable that she should refuse to conform to the standard, and that she should obey the first powerful impulse urging her away. The impulse that now swayed her was powerful in proportion to the narrowness of her life: that is, it was irresistible. It did not even occur to her to resist it. The one question in her mind was how to satisfy it.

She considered the alternative of writing to Robertson, or of going openly to speak to him, and chose the latter. And she went, the next morning, after her father and George Clayborne had gone to town, when her mother was busy with household matters, and Mrs. Byrnes, according to her morning custom, secluded in her own room. The trained nurse was staying over another day, and offered to accompany Dorothy in her walk, but was firmly refused; which fact she at once reported to Mrs. Byrnes, who bestirred herself and followed her niece at a distance and unperceived.

Dorothy walked up the beach, along the edge of the sand beaten hard by the retreating tide. It was a hot and almost breathless day, with a faint land breeze that drove out clouds of gnats from the marshes. The beach and board-walk were almost deserted, though there were a good many people splashing in the low waves that lapped softly on the sand. Dorothy paused opposite the life-boat and sent a glance under the ruffles of her parasol. At first she thought he was not there; and her heart, that had been beating furiously, seemed to stop. Then she saw him, under the board-walk, that cast a black shadow on the dazzle of the sands. She went slowly but straight up to him, with a glance about her; seeing no acquaintances, but not in the mood to stop if she had thought herself observed.

Robertson was lounging against one of the wooden posts, smoking a

cigarette, which he threw away as Dorothy approached. He answered her "Good-morning," but made no other move, as though expecting her to go on up the steps. She paused, uncertain, for a moment, meeting his steady gaze. Then he said gently:

"Don't stop here. You'll be seen."

"But I want to talk to you," she said quickly. "I don't care if I am seen."

"Well, if you don't care——"

He stopped a moment, then with the same gentleness asked:

"What do you want of me?"

"I don't know," said Dorothy.

She had been perfectly simple and direct; but now, as she sank down on the sand beside him, self-consciousness seized her; she blushed and uttered a false note.

"I want to know what that book is I've seen you reading," she said half-playfully.

He seized her hand and drew her toward him; then, suddenly, almost pushed her away.

"You're only a little girl. Better run along," he said roughly. "You don't need to know anything about me."

"But I do," said Dorothy, with passionate sincerity. "I do."

"Well, why? I'm not your sort. You're a young lady, and I'm hired to look after you. It strikes me that you *need* somebody to look after you. If you were just a girl, now——"

"I am—just a girl," said Dorothy.

"You're a baby. You look about sixteen."

"I'm nearly twenty-two."

"Girls don't know much at twenty-two—girls of your sort."

"No—I don't know much."

He looked at her condescendingly, critically, but with admiration.

"You're too pretty to be running about alone. Where's your young man?" he asked abruptly.

"I have n't any young man," said Dorothy haughtily.

He laughed, looking much amused.

"Well, he would like to be your young man, then. You nearly drowned him, though. You're a rather dangerous young lady."

"Don't make fun of me," said Dorothy half-absently.

She looked away from him, out to sea, narrowing her eyes against the fierce glare of the sun on the water, thrilling with keen pleasure. She had a sense of being alone with him, in the midst of boundless space. There was no one near them. From time to time a foot-fall had sounded on the walk overhead, but the invisible passer did not disturb her.

"My father tells me he had a talk with you," she said.

"Yes, he was very kind."

Robertson's tone was still amused, still condescending.

"He asked me to come and see him," he added.

"Well, won't you come?" said Dorothy.

"Come where?" he asked coolly.

"To the house, of course."

"He did n't invite me to call on his family."

"Well, I invite you."

"Very kind of you, I'm sure. No, I don't think I will."

"Why not?"

"My dear young lady, why should I?"

"Because I wish it."

He laughed again.

"Are you serious? Think how your respectable family would snub me! No, thank you; I don't pay calls."

Dorothy's eyes swam in tears, and she looked at him silently, her lips trembling.

"You spoiled child!" he said in a low voice.

He moved, looked about him for his cigarette-case, lit a cigarette, and blew out violently a cloud of smoke. Then he said gently:

"Don't you see, my dear girl, that I can't come to your house? It would only make trouble. I have n't sought it, and it would be unpleasant for me, probably. Do you think you ought to ask me to do it?"

Without answering, Dorothy took up her parasol and started to rise. He put his hand over hers on the sand.

"Don't be angry," he said.

She looked at him with her tear-blurred eyes.

"Good-by, then," she said brokenly.

"No, confound it, this is too much!" he cried. "Look here, can't we meet——"

He stopped suddenly, released her hand, threw away his cigarette, and sat up. A frown contracted his low brow and made his blue eyes look sullen. He muttered something impatiently. In a moment he stood up, took Dorothy by the wrists and pulled her up to her feet.

"All right, I'll come," he said shortly. "I'll come—once. Don't blame me if there's a fuas. Will to-night at eight suit you?"

Dorothy nodded gravely, drying her eyes, and went away.

CHAPTER VII.

AT eight she was on the veranda, dressed in white, with a cloudy spangled scarf over her head. Her mother and Mrs. Byrnes were finishing their dinner; her father was staying in town, as he did several times a week. Promptly on the hour Robertson came, strolling slowly up the walk. She went to meet him at the top of the steps and gave him her hand.

"Shall we sit out here? It's so hot inside," she said softly.

"As you please," he responded, taking the big wicker chair she offered.

The air was close and oppressive. A thunder-storm was approaching, rumbling low in the west. There were a great many mosquitoes. Robertson fanned himself with his straw hat and waited for Dorothy to speak. He looked bulky and rather clumsy in his gray clothes, which fitted badly.

"Won't you smoke?" said Dorothy. "It will help to keep away the mosquitoes."

She took a box of cigars from a little table where some pastilles were burning, and brought it to him. He took a cigar, and she lit it for him.

"Will you have anything to drink—a whiskey and soda?"

"Thanks, I will," he said.

She rang, and when the tray was brought out, she poured the whiskey for him and added the soda and cracked ice. It pleased her to wait upon him, and he took it as a matter of course.

"My father is in town to-night," said Dorothy. "My mother and my aunt will be out in a few minutes."

"What shall we talk about—the weather?" asked Robertson.

"It does n't matter. That will do as well as anything," said Dorothy. "I have n't told them you were coming."

"Oh, you have n't? I hope they'll be polite to me. I'm not used to society."

"What *are* you used to, then? I'm very curious to know."

"Why, nothing much, my dear. A little of everything. I've drifted round the world."

"But *tell* me——"

"You want the story of my life? . . . You'd be disappointed. There's nothing romantic in it."

"Are you English?"

"Born in England," he said shortly. "Raised on a Canadian stock-farm, along with the rest of the live-stock. Why do you want to know?"

"Well, I do."

"Yes, I see that, but——"

"Here they come," said Dorothy, glancing into the hall.

The two ladies came out slowly, rustling in light dresses. Robertson rose from his chair, and Dorothy presented him.

"I am very glad to see you," said Mrs. Forsyth, "and to thank you, Mr. Robertson. I'm sorry Mr. Forsyth is n't at home this evening."

After a moment of dumfounded surprise, Mrs. Byrnes seized the situation which escaped her placid sister. She promptly sat down and entered conversation. Mrs. Forsyth stood a moment, puzzled, then said:

"Really, there are too many mosquitoes out here, and I think we shall have a storm. I shall go in, Milly. Dorothy, you will be eaten up if you stay here." She hesitated, and put out her hand to Robertson.

"We are greatly indebted to you. I'm sure Mr. Forsyth will be very sorry to have missed you. Won't you come in?"

"Thank you, no. I must be going on in a moment," said Robertson.

He had remained standing, but now, as Mrs. Byrnes showed no disposition to follow her sister, he sat down again, and answered some of her questions.

Yes, it was his first season here. No, not three people, only two, had been drowned so far this year—farther down the beach, where there were no life-lines. Certainly, people were extremely foolish to go in over their depth, unless they were strong swimmers. Yes, most people *were* foolish, in one way or another. What was *his* particular line of folly? Difficult to say, there were so many to choose from—perhaps he might claim to be an all-round fool. Yes, decidedly the storm was coming up with a rush.

The lightning was flashing now over the gray, still sea, and the thunder rolling heavily. Dorothy sat on the railing, looking out and listening to Robertson's slow replies and her aunt's quick questions. The first gust of wind swept across the veranda and blew out her tulle scarf, and the end of it dropped on Robertson's shoulder, touching his cheek. He started and turned toward her, then got up from his chair.

"The rain will be here in a jiffy—you must n't stay out," he said, bowed to Mrs. Byrnes, and took up his hat.

"Good-night," said Dorothy, and watched him go with quick, firm steps down the walk and out of sight.

"Dorothy," said Mrs. Byrnes, rising, "would you mind telling me, just for the fun of it, what you are up to?"

Her tone was light, indulgent, and coaxing.

Dorothy laughed, throwing back her head and shutting her eyes.

"Really, I would n't mind telling, if I knew," she said.

"Come up to my room," coaxed Mrs. Byrnes. "Let's have a talk. You must n't stay out here."

"I want to see the storm break. Then I'll come up," conceded Dorothy.

She went into the hall and put on a coat, tied the scarf over her head, and escaped again to the veranda, where she stayed alone, watching the lightning flashes and the gray drifting rain lashing the sea, lifting her face exultantly to the rush of the wind, till her mother ventured to the door and pleaded with her to come in. Then she went upstairs resignedly, found her aunt waiting for her, and submitted to be questioned. Mrs. Byrnes opened with a piece of information.

"I know, Dorothy," she said, "that you were talking to that man on the beach this morning. You made an appointment with him for to-night, did n't you?"

"Yes, I did," Dorothy replied easily.

"Well, I'm glad you made it here, instead of—— You are interested in him, are n't you?"

"Yes, I am."

"His looks, I suppose. He is a striking-looking creature. Not common at all. You know, he's quite a local beau. I asked Lena about him to-day——"

"Lena?" said Dorothy haughtily.

Lena was the chambermaid.

"Yes, she knows all the gossip. She says the girls are crazy about him. She knows several who go down to meet him——"

Dorothy's cheeks were dyed crimson. She looked at her aunt, speechless.

"Yes. So, you see, you must be careful," went on Mrs. Byrnes. "I don't say you should n't see him here, if you find him interesting. But you must remember, of course, that he is n't a gentleman, and not give him any reason to think——"

"To think what?" inquired Dorothy dryly.

"Well, you understand. Don't put yourself at a disadvantage. Men of his class are very quick to——"

"His class? Do you really believe in all that?" demanded Dorothy, eying her aunt with recovered composure.

"Do I believe in what, child?"

"Do you believe that this man, for example, is really inferior to—well, say, to George Clayborne?"

"Of course he is—in every way except looks. There, I admit, he has the advantage. But in training, education, manners——"

"I prefer Robertson's," said Dorothy.

"What? You prefer——"

"I would rather marry a man like him than a man like George."

"Dorothy! Are you crazy?"

"No, I don't think so. But you know I'm of age, and I can do as I like."

"Dorothy!"

"None of you can prevent me," said Dorothy resolutely.

Mrs. Byrnes sat and gazed stupidly at her niece.

"You confess it—you're in love with him," she gasped. "You're mad, Dorothy——"

Dorothy rose and picked up her damp scarf and shook it out, smiling.

"No, but I shall go my own way," she said. "I don't like the way you want me to live, or the husband you've picked out for me. It bores me—George bores me. If I have any husband, I shall pick him out myself, and he'll be a *man*."

With this she left the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHE went across the wide corridor into her own room, locked the door, and opened one of the big windows facing the sea. The first violence of the storm was past; the thunder-clouds were rolling out to sea. The rain drove by in gray veils before the wind. The lights blinked below on the deserted boulevard. The surf, beaten flat by the squall, was beginning to rise again, smashing sullenly on the sand.

Dorothy sat on the window-sill, poised light as a bird about to take flight, leaning forward eagerly, drinking in the freshness of the air, stretching out her slim white arms to the night and the sea. She was possessed by joy, throbbing with it, triumphant, arrogant in the delight of humbling, of yielding herself. She affronted all obstacles to her desire, she invited, defied them. He had not sought her, no. But with so much the more intensity did she seek him. He was conscious of her, and had been for long. He was waiting for her. And she would go to him though the whole world stood in the way. She stretched out her arms to him blindly, rejoicing in all that opposed her, even that he himself opposed her, that he hesitated, was reluctant, simply waited. So much the more was she certain, resolved, afire.

CHAPTER IX.

THERE was a dance at the Casino. The big wainscoted room was filled with women and girls in light dresses, alert, full of life, and there were a few languid men, not enough to go round.

Dorothy, in her tulle ball-dress, sown with tiny pink roses, had escaped the eye of her mother, who sat chatting placidly in a group of dowagers. Dorothy was sitting in the sand, where the shadow of the board-walk cut the moonlight. She had a light cloak about her, and she lay against her lover's shoulder. She sighed, with his kiss on her lips, overcome with happiness.

"You do love me, then?" she murmured.

"Of course, I love you," he answered.

"But for always?"

"As long as you like."

"But you know—we said always."

"Yes, sweetheart."

"You said it——"

"Yes, child. . . . But you'll forget me."

"Never—how could I?"

She clung to him, possessed by the memories of the last few days, the stolen meetings, the passionate self-surrender.

"It was for always," she murmured.

"Must we say it?" he said, and there was a protesting, almost quizzical note in his low voice. His clasp of her was lightly protecting rather than passionate.

"Why not say it?"

"Well—always is a long day. Why not just say what is?"

"Well, what is, then—if you know?"

"Why, that you are a spoiled baby and must have everything you want—and you happen to want me—for the moment——"

"You don't understand."

"I understand better than you do. I've seen a little more of the world than you have, remember."

"The world—what has that to do with it?"

"More than you think, little girl. Do you think you can make the world over to suit yourself?"

"Yes, of course! We can make our own world. Did n't I make you love me?"

"Yes, of course. But perhaps some day you'll cry for the moon and won't be able to get it. Then what?"

"I don't want the moon. The earth is enough for me."

"You don't want much—just now!"

"I want you—don't you consider yourself much?"

"Well, not very much. I'm modest. I have to be."

"I don't see why you have to be. And you're not, any way. You're awfully vain of your looks and your strength."

"No, I don't think so. Besides, that's all I've got to be vain of, you know. I'm not half as proud of myself as you are, my little love."

"I'm not proud—only that you like me."

"How could I help it? You made me."

"Yes, but did n't you want to?"

"Of course, but I did n't dare! I had to wait, don't you see?"

"It had to be," she said dreamily. And then, after a moment: "It has all been easy so far."

"How do you mean, so far?" asked Robertson.

"Why, I mean no one has interfered. But naturally there will be some trouble, when I tell them."

"When you tell them what?" he asked shortly.

"Why, that I intend to marry you."

There was a silence. His arm suddenly clasped her closer and something like a quick sob escaped his lips.

"Good God!" he said.

Dorothy for a moment could not speak. Then she asked, frightened:

"What do you mean?"

He released her and moved away from her. His face was in the moonlight now, and she saw him frowning.

"I mean that you've knocked me over," he said harshly. "What on earth put the idea of marrying me into your head? You can't marry me."

"Why can't I?" cried Dorothy. As he did not answer, she said heavily:

"You mean you don't want to? . . . I never thought of that. . . . I never thought you really would n't want me——"

"I *do* want you," said Robertson sullenly. "But, good Lord! I never saw such a baby in my life! I don't know how to explain it to you——"

Dorothy looked at him in silence.

"See here," he said almost roughly. "I never thought you had any such idea about me. . . . I thought you were like the rest of them . . . you know there are always plenty of girls that want to amuse themselves and have a good time on the quiet. Well . . . naturally, I thought you were one, that's all. What else could I think? You don't know anything about me—you don't know what I'm like any more than Adam. You did n't wait to find out. You did n't even find out what I thought about *you*. You just went out and picked me up because—well, I don't know why, you liked my looks, perhaps—that's generally what it amounts to. Now I find out that you expect to marry me, and you had n't consulted me about that either. . . . Now, look here—and I feel like a fool when I'm saying it—the truth is, I'm married already."

Dorothy sat quite still, looking at him. Her face was in shadow, he could just see the gleam of her eyes.

"I don't like the way this makes me feel," he burst out angrily. "It looks as though I'd been crooked—taken advantage of you—and God knows I never meant to do that. Here you are, a kid about half my age, and knowing no more of the world than a baby—oh, Lord!"

With a savage groan, he threw himself on the sand, away from her.

Still she sat, immovable. The cloak had slipped off her shoulders, and the wind blew her loosened hair about her face.

"Can't you say something?" he demanded harshly.

With a great effort she spoke.

"I—I will—in just a minute. . . . Let me think——"

But it was not thinking—it was a confused, horrible pain that she felt. It was like a physical blow fallen on her.

"You can say anything you want to, to me," he said sullenly. "I'm an awful fool to have got into this."

"No—no," she stammered.

She shivered. He got up and put the cloak carefully about her.

"There's no reason why you should catch cold," he said. "And you'd better go back now, or you'll be missed. We have troubles enough without that."

He put his arm about her and lifted her to her feet, and she leaned against him, closing her eyes.

"Don't think," he said, with emphasis, "that I don't care about you. I do. I liked you from the first time I saw you. I admired you. I did n't like to think, either, that you were—well, I was a fool to think what I did about you. But I never knew anybody like you before. Now, see here, I must talk to you—or no, I'll write. I want to tell you some things. Can you get a letter from the post-office without any risk?"

She nodded.

"Then, if you want to see me, just mail me a note and say where and when. . . . I hate to have you go like this, but there's no use making it worse. . . . Can't you say a word to me?"

She stayed herself against his shoulder with one hand and drew a long breath.

"Only that I love you," she said with a curious hardness in her voice.

"And I want you to remember that."

She fastened her cloak at the throat, and put up her hands to arrange her hair.

"I shall go home, and send the man to my mother with a note," she said. "I shall tell her I had a headache or something—she never asks questions. . . . I shall look for your letter to-morrow morning."

"I'll post it to-night," he said shortly.

"Then, good-night."

She put her cheek against his. She felt his cautious glance about them in the moonlight. They kissed each other.

CHAPTER X.

MRS. BYRNES, judging it useless to say anything to her sister, had gone straight to the head of the house with her report of Dorothy's madness. Mr. Forsyth, interrupted in the rush of a disastrous day, had barred the door of his private office for twenty minutes, and, turning round in his chair and fixing his haggard, intense eyes on Mrs. Byrnes, had listened without a word. She gave a succinct and definite account of Dorothy's acts and words, and ended thus:

"I have n't said anything to Sarah about it, because I knew she would n't do anything. But I'm sure you will, and somebody ought to act promptly, if Dorothy's to be saved."

Mr. Forsyth was silent for a moment, drawing lines on a blotter with a carefully pointed pencil. Then he asked curtly:

"What was your impression of the man?"

"I think he's dangerous," she replied promptly. "Not only is he extremely good-looking, but he has any amount of assurance. He has a quiet way that's really impressive. I think Dorothy's taken the lead in this thing, but of course he'd be willing enough, even if he was n't infatuated with her. He'd see it as a chance."

Mr. Forsyth frowned and jabbed the point of his pencil into the blotter until it broke.

"I can't go down there to-night," he said. "Nor to-morrow either. I've got all I can handle here. It's too bad that you women can't look after Dorothy——"

"Well, you know how much looking after Sarah does," said Mrs. Byrnes caustically. "And as for me, I've done my part in getting hold of the thing and warning you. Dorothy won't listen to me. She might to you, although I must say I don't think either of you has ever tried to get her confidence or to guide her. But I think your best chance is to deal with the man. You might buy him off—get him to disappear. If you could make him see that he has n't anything to expect from you——"

"Perhaps I can make him see that, all right," said Mr. Forsyth grimly.

His mind reverted to his business troubles, to the net that was closing in about him. To struggle against that he needed all his energy.

"I can't go down for a couple of days," he said irritably, rising. "This comes at the worst possible time for me. Can't you go back and keep an eye on Dorothy till I come?"

"No, I can't," said Mrs. Byrnes decidedly. "I have engagements for the rest of this week."

"Well, how would it do to send George down? He has some interest in this——"

"It would n't do at all. He has too much interest, and he'd do something crazy. You don't know George Clayborne as well as I do. He might shoot the man."

"Oh, nonsense," muttered Mr. Forsyth.

"It is n't nonsense. He's crazy about Dorothy. I wish to goodness we could have got her married to him. I've always felt that she might do something wild."

The parent of the wild strain in Dorothy looked deeply oppressed.

"I'll go down just as soon as I can," he said. "At present I'm tied up here."

"Business worrying?" asked Mrs. Byrnes sympathetically, as she arose.

She was used to seeing Wall Street men worried—in fact, she seldom saw them otherwise—and therefore she was not greatly impressed by her brother-in-law's manner. He said carelessly, as he conducted her through the outer office:

"Oh, nothing much."

Nevertheless, it did just cross her mind that it would be a good thing to sound George. George would know what Mr. Forsyth was doing, and if things were n't going well, it would be necessary to investigate and perhaps change her investments. But her confidence was not shaken enough

to make her change her plans for the week. Consequently, she went to Long Island without seeing George.

And Mr. Forsyth remained in town, absorbed in his losing fight. The failure of a big firm was rumored, and he was making frantic efforts to clear himself from his connection with it, not to be dragged down in its fall. When he got away finally, with the result still uncertain, it was Saturday night, the night of the dance; and he entered the house to find his wife and daughter absent. Rather reassured at hearing that Dorothy was dancing, he went into the library to await their return, and, tired out, fell asleep in his easy-chair.

When Dorothy came in a little later, the butler told her that her father had arrived and had asked for her.

"I think he's waiting in the library, Miss," the man added softly.

"I want you to take a note for me to the Casino," she said, throwing off her cloak wearily, and she went upstairs slowly. In her mirror a vision of her own face, white and hard, confronted her for an instant. She wrote her note, and rang.

"Tell my father that I'm home, and that I'm not well and am going to bed," she said to the maid who answered the bell, "and give this to Jerome. He's to go at once."

She shut her door, with a feeling that the servants had looked at her curiously, with a dull question as to her father's reason for wanting to see her. But whatever that was, she could not talk to him to-night. Sighing heavily, she began to undress. In her hair a wreath of little pink roses was fastened. Her cold, trembling fingers could not undo it, and with a sudden fierce gesture she tore it out, hurting herself, and glad of the physical pain.

Then came a knock on her door.

"Dorothy—I want to speak to you," said her father's voice, it seemed to her harshly.

She could not answer for a moment. Then she opened the door a few inches.

"I came home with a fearful headache, and I was going to bed. Is it anything important?" she asked, surprised at the calmness of her own voice.

"Yes, it's important. Can't you come down for a while?" Mr. Forsyth said sombrely.

She hesitated and looked at him forlornly.

"I'm really ill. If you *could* wait till morning——"

"I suppose I can," he said. "But then I want a serious talk with you, Dorothy."

"Yes, Father."

"Well, get to bed, then. Where's your mother?"

"She's coming. I felt ill and came away. Good-night, Father."

But he still waited there, and suddenly she knew, strangely, what he was waiting for. She bent forward and kissed his cheek. And this was a strange thing, for it had been a long time since any sign of affection had been between them. Then he went away. And Dorothy, locking her door, and slowly undressing, found now that she was crying, and the terrible pressure inside her head, behind her eyes, lessened a little. She fell asleep in the dawn, and, waking late, thought the first thing of her letter. She remembered that this was Sunday, and that Jerome went to the post-office on Sundays at half-past ten. She must get that letter before it went into the family post-bag. It was now ten o'clock. She dressed quickly, and tied a veil over her hat to hide her unusual pallor and the black lines under her eyes. She could not hope to escape inspection, for her parents breakfasted early, and they would be awaiting her downstairs.

Her father looked over his newspaper, as she went out on the veranda, and her mother said:

"Why, Dorothy! Have you had your breakfast? Where are you going?"

"I've had all I want. I'm just going along the board-walk for a little way. My head still aches," she said.

Mr. Forsyth rose, putting down his paper.

"I wish you would n't go out now, Dorothy," he said rather sternly.

Tears of nervousness rose to her eyes.

"I must go," she said. "I'm going alone, and I'll be back in twenty minutes."

CHAPTER XI.

At last she had her letter. The sight of it, her name on the envelope, made her heart leap. She had never seen his writing before. It was a clear, careful, painstaking writing, small and regular. She carried the letter in her hand as though it were a live thing, a thing terribly precious and important to her, and yet that might wound her almost to death, a fateful thing. She went down to a pavilion, deserted for the moment, overlooking the sea, to read it.

MY DEAR GIRL:

I hardly know what to write you. I think what you feel about me is just a fancy and will pass away. I think if you knew me better you would n't care much about me. You would be disappointed in me, and whatever romantic ideas you have would not last very long. It has always been so. Women have n't cared for me very long. I'm not that kind.

Now you ought to know a little about me, though I don't care to write about myself. I had a very miserable childhood, though I shall not tell you the reason, for it does n't matter. I always felt that I had to look out for myself, and I can't remember the time when I did n't have a bitter feeling about those I lived with. As soon as I was able to work, I ran

away. I have been a cabin-boy and a sailor, a tramp, a farm-hand, and a prize-fighter—all before I was twenty-five. Then I met a woman who wanted to marry me. She was older than I, and she was independent, had a big farm of her own and was a splendid manager. She was very strong-willed and always knew what she wanted. She wanted me to be educated. Of course I'd never had any education, except what you can pick up round the world. Well, to please her, I went to a country college, and even studied law. But it did n't suit me. I'd always been used to life in the open, and roving. But that lasted nearly ten years. We had one baby, that died. Then she found she could n't do what she wanted with me, after all. There was a good deal of trouble. I'm not going to say a word against her. She's a good woman, and means well by every one, only it has to be her way. And after a while she saw that her way could n't be my way, and we separated. That was six years ago. She writes to me still, and has never wanted a divorce, though of course she is n't contented. So that's how things are. I was fond of her for a good many years, but I've liked a good many since, in a way that suits me better. I don't seem to be cut out for a domestic life.

So now you can understand why I was thunderstruck at your idea that we could marry. I have seen plenty of romantic women in your class who thought it very exciting to have an affair with a man in my position. I don't know why it seems to them exciting, but it does. I suppose they like the idea that I am an inferior, in a way, and that they can be unworldly and unconventional. Perhaps you felt something like that, that it would be rather a fine thing to stoop to me and raise me up. I know my wife did. But she was willing to stick to it and take all the consequences, and you seem to be too. I respect you both for it. I don't mind your thinking that you had only to put out your hand and gather me in. I don't blame you. You've been taught to think that you can have anything you want, and that the rest of the world exists only to serve you. If it's just a fancy you have for me, nobody's hurt, and nobody need be the wiser. You can forget me when you go away from here, or when I go, in a couple of months—or, I hope, just remember me pleasantly, once in a while, in a way that won't hurt you.

But I don't want you to get into any trouble on my account, with your family or anything. If they suspect anything, and you have n't taken any trouble to avoid it, it's bound to be hard for you. I just want to say that I'll take my share of any trouble that comes along, if I can. If you want to drop me now, it's all right, and I understand. It's probably the best thing for you. If you want to keep on seeing me, you'll have to take your choice whether it's in secret or openly. You've seemed to prefer the latter, but perhaps now you won't. When you've thought it all over, let me know. I think enough of you to say that you can count on me as far as you want to go.

Yours,

D. R.

CHAPTER XII.

DOROTHY read this letter twice, folded it, and put it carefully back in its envelope. Then she went back to the house, walking slowly and firmly. Her father was in the library, busy with the long-distance telephone. He beckoned her in impatiently, and finished his conversation, to which she

listened attentively, with a feeling that this business detail was somehow immensely important. She looked at him intently, and noticed his nervous manner and haggard look. It seemed to her that she had never really looked at him before. She had a sense that for the first time she could see clearly.

He sank back in his chair and glanced at his watch.

"Dorothy, I have to get the next train to town," he said abruptly, "and I don't know when I shall be back here. I would n't have come down if it had n't been for what your aunt told me. Now, I have just half an hour, and I want you to sit down and tell me whether what she said about you and this man, what 's-his-name—Robertson—is all nonsense, or what it is."

Dorothy sat down, facing him and the bright light from the eastern windows.

"It is n't nonsense. I care very much for him," she said clearly.

"It's true, then!" Mr. Forsyth groaned. "I wish to the Lord, Dorothy, you had n't chosen this time to cut up, when I'm strained about to the breaking-point as it is. Look here!" he cried, sitting up suddenly, grasping the arms of his chair. "Do you know that if I can't pull myself out of the place where I am in a couple of days, I shall be bankrupt? Yes, every dollar I have in the world! Everything! . . . Now, is this a time to come bothering me with nonsense?"

Dorothy's narrow eyes opened to their widest. She leaned forward.

"Is that true?" she asked breathlessly. "Oh, poor Father, how did it happen? Why did n't you tell me——"

"Tell you? Tell you?" he repeated irritably. "Why should I tell you? What do you know about it? . . . And, mind, not a word to your mother. I may get through all right, and there's no use worrying her. I only told you because—because I want you to realize that something serious might happen, that's all, and that you ought to stand by to help, and not——"

His voice quavered and broke, and he dropped the bronze knife that his nervous hands had been playing with noisily upon the floor.

Stand by to help! In all her life it was the first time that words like that had been spoken to Dorothy.

She sprang up and seated herself on the arm of his chair and put her arm round his shoulders.

"Father! Why, you're perfectly worn-out!" she cried, and her voice thrilled with feeling. "I think it's terrible that you should have been worried like this, and none of us know! It's wrong—you ought to have told us!"

Mr. Forsyth's hand closed tight upon his daughter's, and he stifled a sob. She drew his head against her shoulder and kissed him.

"Father! I will help! I want to, any way I can—if I only knew how!"

"Well, don't worry me," he murmured peevishly, still holding her hand tight, and, she felt, clinging to her as he never had done before, with a sudden desperate need of affection and support.

"I won't worry you," she said, profoundly moved. "You need n't worry about me——"

She broke off suddenly, and sat staring over his head at the wall opposite.

"Father," she said after a moment, "don't you think I could understand if you told me just what's the trouble?"

"No, you could n't, and, anyhow, I have n't time now," he said wearily. "You don't know anything about business——"

"Well, I want to know, when you have time to tell me. . . . And I just want to say, Father, that I don't want you to worry about *me*, whatever happens. I mean that if—if we lose our money, I shan't mind being poor—I shan't really—I can work, and I will. I want to, any way——"

With a brusque gesture, letting go her hand, he got up.

"Well, you don't know anything about *that*," he said. "I guess you could n't do very much work, Dorothy."

His tone was bitterly indulgent, rather slighting, and yet he looked at her with a new kindness, even with a certain vague pleasure.

"You just be a good girl, that's about all you can do," he said paternally.

Then the shadow darkened his face again, and he looked at his watch and began gathering up some papers on his desk.

"What's the matter with George Clayborne?" he said abruptly.

"The matter with him?"

"I mean, why did you quarrel with him? I thought you liked him pretty well."

"I liked him—in a way——"

"Well, I wish you'd liked him enough to marry him—then *you'd* have been taken care of, anyhow——"

"I don't want to be taken care of," said Dorothy absently.

She was watching her father, and thinking what his reference to George meant. Perhaps that George could help him. She noticed that he had difficulty in tying up his parcel of papers.

"Let me do that."

She tied the string carefully, and said:

"Father, does George know about this?"

"He does n't know much—yes, he knows I'm involved."

"Well, can't he do something?"

"I would n't ask him—now," said Mr. Forsyth shortly.

Dorothy was silent.

He took his parcel and looked round the room.

"Now I've got to go, the car is there. Just don't say a word to anybody about this. And promise me that you won't do anything foolish while I'm gone. I meant to talk to you about this crazy notion of yours, but somehow the other thing came up, my mind's so burdened with it. I don't believe for a minute that you're serious. You could n't want to marry a man like that. Why, you might just as well talk about marrying Jerome or the chauffeur! Now, for heaven's sake, be sensible, so that I won't have to think of anything but work just now—and Lord knows that's enough! You'd find out the difference quick enough if you did n't have me to look out for you!"

He kissed his daughter, not even waiting for her promise, took his hat and coat from Jerome in the hall, said good-by to his wife on the veranda, and waved to them, forcing a smile, as the motor started.

"I think it's a shame that he has to go to town to-day!" said Mrs. Forsyth, gazing after the car, with her usual placidity slightly ruffled. "And he looks so tired. He hardly slept last night. Business worry, I suppose."

Dorothy looked at her mother, with a sudden sharp feeling of pity. She was realizing what it would mean to her parents if money disaster overtook them. What would her father be like if he were bankrupt, his business gone? What would her mother do, without her possessions and the occupation these gave her? She felt they would be miserable, both of them, and she hoped ardently that it would n't happen.

After all, why should n't George help? Nobody would ask him for money, of course, but he might be able to do something. He could at least tell her what was happening. The idea of calling him up by telephone came to her, but she rejected it. She had not seen him for about ten days. He had asked if he might come down this Sunday, and she had written, putting him off. . . .

Mrs. Forsyth sighed and said:

"It's too late now for church. I suppose I might as well take off my hat."

She rustled into the house. Dorothy looked after her thoughtfully, and then her gaze wandered slowly over the carved wood and tapestry furnishings of the big hall, and the elaborate outdoor drawing-room made by the veranda behind its striped awnings. Here was everything for comfort—for this comfort her father slaved and worried, and her mother planned and watched unremittingly.

For herself—let it go. She had been honest in saying that she did n't care. She expected to be poor anyhow.

She sank down now in a hammock, forgetting everything else to read Robertson's letter again. The sentence at the end of that letter had given her some security:

You can count on me as far as you want to go.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEVERTHELESS, her need was to see him now, at once. She could not wait to write him and make an appointment for the next day. It could not hurt him, she thought, if she were seen and gossiped about—and certainly it could not now hurt her. She had an hour before lunch-time, and at this time, hot noon, there would be fewer people about. She went, therefore, to find him at his usual station.

He was lounging in the shade, on the old mottled rug that looked like a tawny tiger-skin. He was not reading, but looking out over the still, shimmering sea with a fixed, unwinking gaze. As she came up, he looked at her gravely, and put up his hand and drew her down beside him.

"Well?" he said, smiling faintly.

She sat beside him, clasping his hand in both hers, her jealous, passionate gaze resting on him.

"I've read your letter, and," she said with a catch in her voice, "I liked it. It's honest. You have n't pretended that it mattered very much to you how it came out, and—I like you better for not pretending——"

"It does matter," he said in his low, quiet tones. "I'll do whatever you want."

"Yes, yes—but you don't want, yourself! I know you will—you said you'd stand by me, and I believe it. . . . But you don't care—you don't care, yourself!"

"I do care for you," he said.

"But not as I do! . . . Can't you see? It would only be because I wanted it—just as it has been all along! . . . Oh, why can't you love me?"

"Well—supposing I did, what then?" he asked seriously.

"Why, then, you would want to be with me always, as I do with you. You would n't care about anything else, any more than I do. You'd——"

"You mean, I would divorce my wife," he said thoughtfully. "Do you really mean that?"

"Yes—for you are n't really married, as it is. You've been separated for seven years, and you don't care about her——"

"Well, I do, in a way," he said, with a puzzled frown. "And I could n't divorce her, anyhow. I deserted her, you see—that's what they call it. She would have to get the divorce, and I don't know whether she would want to."

"If you care for her——" began Dorothy in a shaking voice, moving away from him.

"I don't want to go back to her, if that's what you're thinking of," he said.

"I think you have no feeling at all!" she burst out.

He shrugged his shoulders and looked away from her.

Desperately, she studied his calm profile, the low brow, the clear gleam of the blue iris, the two lips closing so evenly and firmly together, the chin that balanced so perfectly, the whole harmony of his face. . . . She noticed the proportion and setting of the ear, too, close to his head, and the powerful line of his neck, and the close-clipped blond hair tinged with red, curling where it was not cut too close, instinct with life. . . . As always, the sense of his beauty tended to quiet her, and she lost herself for some moments in the keen, almost impersonal joy of contemplation. She could think about him, then, impersonally, and she wondered if the great charm of this being for her did not lie partly in just what she had called lack of feeling. . . . Was it not just this quiet and balance and absence of nervous, passionate emotion, was it not partly the fact that he did not need her, that so powerfully attracted her to him?

She noticed on his shoulder a rent in the faded orange-red bathing-suit. And by a swift transition she thought of the one passage in his letter that showed emotion—the reference to his neglected childhood. Instinctively she spoke of that, while she felt compassion for the time when he had been lonely, and a keen desire to mend that hole in his bathing-suit.

"You *were* unhappy once," she said with sombre eagerness. "When you were a child."

He turned and looked at her, and the frown she knew made his eyes look steely.

"I'd rather not talk about that," he said curtly.

"But why not? . . . You won't tell me anything that really matters to you!"

"Well, that does n't matter now—and I don't want to talk about it, that's all. It was bitter, and I don't want to remember it . . . except I've always been sorry for children, when they had hard luck, and liked them. . . . I suppose if mine had lived I should n't have left her."

He spoke regretfully, half-absently, and then said:

"But it's all in the day's work. I was meant to be a rolling stone, I guess. Not much on anchoring anywhere."

Then he looked very gently at Dorothy.

"You're a fine girl, and worth something a whole lot better than me," he said, touching her hand lightly. "I'm not much for you, my dear. I don't like the kind of life you do, and you would n't like my kind. I could n't give you anything. Your family would raise the deuce, and I don't blame them. I have n't any money, you know; we'd be poor. You don't know what it is to be poor. You'd soon lose the fancy you have for me, and then where would you be? . . . Don't you see? . . . You seem to blame me for not urging you. . . . But I think the right thing for me to do is to clear out of here, right now—and I ought to have done it before now, I suppose——"

"I won't have you do that," said Dorothy, in a quiet, hard tone. "I

won't drive you away from here. I won't make any more trouble for you——"

She stopped and clasped her hands tightly round her knees to control the trembling that shook her. He watched her for a moment, and then said in a deeper tone:

"If you're disturbed by anything that's happened, and if you want to take all the risks and feel it's worth it—I mean just what I said. I'll stand for everything, and I'll do exactly as you say. And I'll do my best to look out for you. But I won't urge you one more step, for I see all the consequences to you. You'll have to decide just what you want."

Dorothy, gazing blindly out at the sea, had a feeling as though she were sinking in a quicksand, or as though the water out there had hold of her and was drawing her out, out, to drown her. To what had she trusted herself, to what blind and cruel instinct had she yielded? What force had she affronted, with such complete self-confidence? She could not control it, it was dragging her down to the very depths. . . .

She got up, white and shaking.

"Come to the house to-night, after ten," she said. "I'll tell you then."

"I'll come," he said soberly, and looked after her gravely as she walked away, holding herself proudly erect. . . .

CHAPTER XIV.

DOROTHY, at luncheon with her mother, almost forgot herself for the time. All sorts of new feelings seemed to be crowding upon her. She was feeling now, really for the first time, the bond that united the three members of this family, each one heretofore so self-absorbed, so unconscious of the real existence of the others. She felt that misfortune, if it came, must unite them more closely. Instinctively she knew that she would be needed, if this blow fell upon her parents. She must, as her father had said, stand by to help.

She looked at her mother, calm, handsome, unconcerned, with a sense of amazement. How was it that such an event could be impending, and her mother have no suspicion of it? What a shock would it be to her if at this moment she could see what was happening in the lives of the two people most nearly connected with her! Dorothy felt the weakness of such ignorance in her mother, the lack of energy and of imagination that it showed. If she knew nothing, it was because she had never wanted to know. She had existed placidly, taking it for granted that things would always go on well. She was a religious woman, and did not concern herself much with the things of this world; except, of course, that a certain way of living was suitable to the family circumstances, and that it was her duty to care for this, just as it was her husband's duty to provide

the wherewithal. Dorothy's duty never had been clearly defined, but naturally would be when she married, as her mother took it for granted she would suitably.

Mrs. Forsyth's eyes were a gentle, forget-me-not blue. She had never, so far as Dorothy could remember, lost her temper. Her manners were invariably sweet and considerate. She never asked unpleasant questions, of her husband or any one else. She proceeded on the assumption, always, that other people were doing what they should, just as she herself was. . . .

Dorothy felt an immense pity for her, as they chatted over the pleasant lunch-table. She understood her father's wish to protect her, spare her, even to the last minute. To be sure, the blow would fall all the more crushingly if it came without warning—but, then, it might not come. She felt ages older than her mother, as she studied her compassionately, realizing how impossible such a life would be for herself, how impossible that *she* could be protected and spared. No, for better or worse, life would be different to her from that. . . .

They were taking coffee on the veranda, and Mrs. Forsyth was mildly complaining of the heat, saying, "It will be terrible for your father in town, and I do *wish* he had n't gone in," when a motor-cab drove up and stopped before the house. George Clayborne got out of it. Dorothy had a sudden shrinking of the heart. "It has come!" she thought, glancing at her mother.

Mrs. Forsyth rose, with a pleased exclamation, and went to greet George as he came up the steps.

"Why did n't you telephone you were coming? We've just finished lunch, but come right in—they'll get you something," she said hospitably.

"No, thanks; I've had all I want," said George, shaking hands with Dorothy and looking at her significantly. "I'll just take a cup of coffee, if I may."

Dorothy moved to touch the bell, and sat down near George, who had dropped into a low chair, wearily. His usually florid face was pale and his eyes were reddened.

"Dear me, you look fagged out," said Mrs. Forsyth kindly. "Did you come from town? Mr. Forsyth had to go in again this morning."

"Yes, I know. I saw him," said George absently.

Dorothy gave him his cup of coffee, and a light for his cigar. For the first time she wished to be left alone with him, but her mother lingered, making conversation. Finally Mrs. Forsyth, fighting against drowsiness, caught herself in a yawn, and, with a dignified apology, withdrew to her own apartment.

"Of course you'll stay overnight," she said.

"I must go back on the midnight train, I'm sorry to say," George responded.

He drew his chair close to Dorothy's, sat down, and looked straight at her.

"I've just come from your father," he said in a low voice, "and I judge from what he said that you know something about his trouble."

"He told me something—this morning—not very much in detail," she answered quickly. "He told me that he might be bankrupt."

George nodded. "He's in bad."

"Well?" said Dorothy. "What did you come to tell me? Is it certain?"

"One thing is certain," said George clearly, "and that is that I won't let him go under."

"But tell me, what can you do? Can you help it?"

"I can help *him*—if he'll let me."

"I wish you'd tell me just what that means. Do you mean you'll lend him money?"

"Yes, it means money—and a good deal. It's no use going into all the details with you—you would n't understand them. He's been speculating, of course, and has been caught short, along with a lot of other people. Some big men in the street are squeezing the little fellows, and your father is one of the little ones. Randall & Champney—that's a big stock firm—are going to fail. Your father stands to lose three-quarters of a million unless he can cover by to-morrow, and that will wipe him out."

"And he can't do it?" said Dorothy. "He said he might be able——"

"It would be a miracle if he could. . . . He's taken big chances. I never speculate myself, and I don't hold with that kind of thing," said George. "But at the same time I can't see your father smash up."

"I don't see why *you* should be responsible. . . . It seems to me that he ought n't to take your help, if it means a loss to you——"

"Well, it might not mean a loss, eventually. I merely cover his obligations and give him a chance to make good. . . . And he would be willing to do it, Dorothy—and this is what I came to see you about—if he thought things were right between you and me. In that case, it would give me a right to help him—do you see?"

"Yes, I see," said Dorothy in a low voice. "But I can't do that."

"I'm not asking you to do anything, except to let him think certain things for a time. It would n't be long. I don't ask anything of you, Dorothy, for myself."

"No—only the hardest thing of all: to take advantage of your generosity. Don't you see that I can't do that?"

"I think you ought to. You ought n't to consider merely yourself."

"I don't think I am considering merely myself. I think it would be dead wrong for us to take your help, in such circumstances. It would n't make it any better to lie about it. I think we ought to take the consequences——"

"Yes, but do you know what the consequences might be? I'd better tell you frankly. Your father has used certain securities which did n't belong to him, which belonged to his clients. If he can't make good on those, he might be liable to a criminal prosecution. Now, you might be willing to see him in poverty—and your mother—but how would you like to see him in prison?"

"Oh!" murmured Dorothy, turning white.

"You need n't think he has done anything very uncommon. It's done a good deal, I believe, and if it's successful, everything is all right. It's only in case of failure that you get found out and have to pay for it. I'm not saying that I don't think he's done wrong—I do think so. And I think if he pulls out of this he'll be more careful in future. But you can see it is n't a time to stand on small scruples. You and I understand each other perfectly. I know you don't care for me, and I'm not trying to make the smallest claim on you. All I want you to do is to help me in this one instance. Of course I know you don't want to take anything from me. But in this case you ought to. You won't be the worst sufferer if this smash-up comes."

"No, that's true," she said harshly. "I'd infinitely rather be poor than live this way—especially now I see what it means. It means stealing, really—why don't you say so?"

"Oh, it's easy for you to judge! You've never troubled about how you were living, have you? You've never wanted to know what it meant! I can tell you it is n't so easy for the men who have to fight for the means to keep women of your class in luxury——"

"They don't have to do it!" cried Dorothy. "You know—you've heard me say—I hate this kind of thing——"

"Yes, you've said it, when you felt the limitations of it. But you've taken it all your life. And most women of your class don't think about it at all, even as much as you've done. They merely take. You know that, and that's what I meant. I'm not criticising you especially, except that I don't think you're competent to judge your father in this matter. It is n't fair to stand on the outside, and merely judge if things go wrong."

"No—you're right about that," said Dorothy faintly.

"Even if he has been wrong, we've got to help him now. Lots of innocent people would suffer if he's forced into bankruptcy. I want to go to him now with word from you that I can back him up. My loss—if it comes to a loss—won't be enough to matter at all to me. I can spare it perfectly well, and, as I said, we may be able to get out without loss. Then when he's on his feet again we can drop the pretense quietly, and nobody'll be hurt. Is it a bargain?"

Dorothy sat rigid, pondering.

"He won't believe you," she said after a few moments. "This morning I told him——"

"I know what you told him," said George.

He drew a long breath, flung his cigar away, got up, and walked the length of the veranda, and came back.

"Now I want to talk to you about that," he said.

CHAPTER XV.

SHE saw that he was making a strong effort at self-control. And he succeeded, for when he spoke it was quietly, though with a deep undertone of bitterness.

"For three years," he said, "I've wooed you, Dorothy. I've loved you devotedly, I've always hoped that some day you would give me the feeling I wanted. Now I know it's hopeless. I know you can have it for another man, but not for me. I won't say what that means to me, and I hope you'll never know, never understand, all it means. To fail—like that—and to know that what you've wanted more than anything in the world you can never have—no, I hope you'll never know it. . . . But I think I could bear it if I knew you were happy, if the man that you preferred to me——"

He stopped, and struggled for a moment, clenching his hands on the arms of his chair.

"I could see, when I saw you with that man!" he cried. "I could see you giving him something—an intense interest—that you never, never gave me! And why, tell me why! You don't know him, you have nothing in common with him, he's out of your world—I don't speak of what he is, almost a menial. There's something unnatural in it, something revolting—and that it should be you, *you*! It is n't decent that you should do a thing like this——"

And now all the bitterness surged up, distorting his face, flushing it with dark anger.

"One hears of such things!" he cried. "Every now and then some silly, neurotic girl makes a scandal and a laughing-stock of herself on account of an infatuation for some—— But that you should have permitted, encouraged—you, with all your pride—— My God, Dorothy!"

Again he sprang up and walked away, struggling for calmness. He came back to say, his voice trembling:

"I did n't mean to reproach you, Dorothy. I know it's because of your ignorance of the world, it's some foolish romantic notion—you've always been protected, sheltered. You don't know what men are like, some of them—how they'll take advantage of ignorance and weakness. This man—he sees you living in a way that means to him that you are rich, and he—he——"

"No, you're mistaken," said Dorothy in a clear, hard voice. "He is n't a fortune-hunter."

"Oh, of course, you think he's perfectly disinterested—of course! But he's made a mistake if he thinks you have n't protectors and that he won't be called to account! After I saw your father and before I came down here, I engaged a detective to look up his record. Your father can easily get him dismissed here. And then he'll have to deal with me."

There was an ominous roll in the last words. George flung himself into his chair as though exhausted. The lines in his face were deepened, his lips were dry and feverish. All his look of physical well-being was gone. Suffering had wrung his face, spiritualized it, made it more vital and significant. Dorothy looked at him, wincing, her heart smitten with pity. For the first time really he moved her, for the first time she felt his appeal. All the trivial things she disliked about him were shorn away—all she saw was his deeply passionate and suffering soul.

"George," she said sadly, "you can't bully him—nor me either. You did n't need the detective—I can tell you all about him. . . . Of course I suppose you could get him dismissed from his employment, but that would n't separate me from him. Nothing can—unless I choose."

George looked at her, setting his jaw.

"No, George; you can't force me—nobody can. But of my own free will—"

A sudden sob broke her voice, and she stopped. George leaned toward her.

"Dorothy! You mean—you might give him up—"

She looked at him, dry-eyed, despairingly.

"Oh, Dorothy, if you only could do that—if you could see for yourself how impossible it is—"

At that word she sprang up suddenly.

"Yes, yes, it is impossible!" she cried, with a wild impulse of despair. "You don't know how impossible it is! *He* does n't care about me, George, *he* does n't want me—after all, after all—he does n't really want me—"

She began to laugh hysterically.

"So you see what a row you've been making about nothing. Don't look so savage—it is n't his fault that he does n't want me—"

She caught hold of the back of a tall chair and hid her face on her arm.

George got up and came toward her.

"Dorothy," he said in a deep, trembling voice, "trust me. . . . Perhaps I have n't given you much reason to-day—but the deepest thing in me is the wish that you should trust me—the wish to be of some good to you. . . . Take me as though I were your brother, Dorothy! Let me stand between you and harm. . . ."

His voice sank, became inaudible. He put his arm round Dorothy and raised her, and she turned to him for a moment, leaning her face against his shoulder, her eyes closed, breathing quickly as in pain.

"My poor Dorothy—if you are unhappy, too——"

She moved away from him gently, and looked at him almost tenderly.

"You are good to me—you are good," she said softly.

"Then, tell me, Dorothy, let me help you——"

"Not now—I must go—I want to be by myself now for awhile. . . .
I'm going down to the beach. I'll be back to dinner. You go and lie down now and try to sleep—poor George——"

A quick change showed in his face.

"No," she said hurriedly; "I'm not going to see any one—don't think that. I want to be alone, and think."

"And your father?" he said then, quietly. "I want to telephone him that it's all right. Then I'll go up to-night, and to-morrow will see him clear."

"I can't say no," said Dorothy, after a few moments' intense thought.

"But there are some conditions. First, do you think he can be kept from doing this kind of thing again, from taking such risks?"

"I don't know—but I'll do my best. Naturally, I shall have some power over him, in a way. I might be able to control——"

"If there is n't a fair chance of that, I won't consent," said Dorothy clearly. "And I see that it must n't be left all to you, either. . . . My mother must know about this, and she and I must have something to say about it. . . . We must change our way of living, there must n't be any demands from us that could press on him. . . . Will you help me, then? Do you think we can do this, George?"

"I think we can, Dorothy, if you'll help work it out," he said.

"Of course I shall."

"And you won't let anything else interfere—just now——"

His appeal was hesitating, almost humble; yet now he stood upright, and held himself with new energy, and there was a new light in his face, like a faint gleam of hope, almost of joy.

"But to think of all it will cost you!" she cried. "In money and time and work—to think of your doing this for us!"

"In God's name, what else should I do with myself?" he asked simply.

"George, you're too good to me," she said brokenly. "I have to take so much from you—I can never repay. . . . I have n't deserved anything——"

"Only be right, Dorothy," he urged passionately. "Don't throw yourself away—don't gamble with your life. Think how we all depend on you—we need you——"

"Yes," she said gravely; "I see it."

She freed her hands gently, and went into the hall to get a parasol.

"Go and telephone. . . . I'll be back some time before dinner," she assured him, smiling faintly, and went down the steps and toward the sea.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE heat of the day was broken. A fresh wind was beginning to blow, at first in light gusts, then strongly, straight from the sea. The still water was broken up and darkened, and it began to flash, and farther out to show lines of foam. The tide was coming in.

The beach and the walls were dotted now with people, and more kept coming, well-dressed, quiet-voiced people, and many children with nursemaids. Dorothy, lying on the sand under her parasol, close to the water that kept advancing, breaking in little short waves, felt more solitary than ever in her life before.

The very fact that she was drawn now more than ever into the lives of others, that now she must act with them and for them, intensified the solitude in which she must decide her own problem. No one could help her there. She had to decide how she should use her will and the strength she felt in herself—whether to grasp for herself at something which would perhaps, after all, always elude her, or to turn away and go on. In any case, it could not be submission, mere yielding. She felt a passionate will to live, if not in one way, then in another. If one way was closed to her, she would find another. She would not be beaten down by anything that had happened or could happen to her. There was, for one thing, hard work ahead of her. Circumstances now had made her of definite importance in the life of her family, and she was resolved to keep this position and use it. Certain practical things had to be done. They would now have a money-debt to George Clayborne, and that debt must be paid. As she had said to him, their scale of living-expenses must be cut down—there must be no pressure on her father from that side. He must be bound not to gamble—George would help there. George's help was indispensable, and she would take it and make any return she could.

By now her father knew that he would be saved from ruin. She had got over the shock of the knowledge of the full extent of his weakness. This weakness now moved her to pity and even to a warmer, a more active, affection. She acknowledged the truth of George's reproaches. Yes, she had been stupidly ignorant and careless, but she would make up for it now, she would stand by to help with all her power. . . .

And George. . . . Humbly she acknowledged her debt to him—a debt that perhaps she could never pay. What could she give in return for such devotion? More feeling, certainly, than she had ever had for him before—warm admiration, warm affection, she felt for him now. He was stronger than she had thought him, finer, sweeter. She felt deeply the appeal of his long faithful love of her. The tears came into her eyes now as she thought of it.

He might cease to court her, and be made into a friend. This she pondered, moving back a little as a wave broke almost upon her, and saying to herself with decision:

"Anything can be done, if one makes up one's mind to it."

Even giving up may be an active thing. Having the responsibility of a decision practically involving many lives within her hand, either way it must be active. Fiercely she fought against the idea that in any way she was being forced to give up. That frightful feeling of being swept off her feet, of being drawn and driven by an irresistible power—that should not come back upon her. . . .

She began to think about Robertson now—not to feel, for it seemed to her that she was merely a brain, that she could see him dispassionately, with perfect clearness, and understand him and their relation. She justified him perfectly in his attitude toward her, from the start. She knew him the man of no deep passion, of many superficial relationships—rudderless and drifting so far as other human beings were concerned—therefore a danger, a derelict on the highway of the human sea. There was no deep feeling to keep him steady, never would he reach port. He would drift, drift always, before the wind and tides. .

All the more dangerous was he because he was not a weak man. No one could take possession of him. He was strong and sufficient for himself, his strength was as real as his charm. He was simple, he was all of a piece, and impregnable. That was his danger to others. He was perfectly well-meaning too, he was straight and honest. There was no guile in him, no meanness, nothing petty, there was even a deep sweetness; but it was a sweetness elemental and impersonal, like that of the wind and the sea—as alluring, and as perilous. . . .

Some such thoughts as these did she think about him. . . .

Never would she regret having known him, wilfully having brought it about. This experience, even if it were now ended, would color her life always. It had been a true instinct that had led her toward him. He charmed her and moved her as no person had ever done, and the emotion did not end with him. He had quickened her life, set it to a faster, a more vital rhythm—nothing could alter that, and nothing could be too much to pay for it.

She felt now that she could let him go, and go on. . . .

And she must let him go. Almost she felt as though she had caged a wild bird for a moment in her hands, and felt its heart beating for liberty against her fingers. This was the truth of him. He would let himself be bound to her if she insisted, but he did not desire it. He did not desire her deeply, he did not need her, he did not believe she needed him.

Perhaps she did not need him. . . . She saw herself, impersonally, a creature destined to experience, in many various forms. She felt the desire for it stirring deep within her, an infinite curiosity, an infinite zest. One could go on and on. . . .

The sea wind blew strong upon her now, and again she moved back before the tide. It was rushing in strongly, the waves breaking higher

and higher, with a sharp impact and a crash of foam. The plane of the sea, from where she lay, was a tumbled mass of dark blue and green and purple, spotted with white. A few sail-boats in the distance, careening sharply, seemed making for harbor. She had put down her parasol and no longer felt the sun. Looking up, after a long reverie, she saw that it was down in the west. Hours had passed. . . .

She turned and looked up the beach, her face grave and expectant. The walk was thronged now with people, gayly dressed women, men in flannels, invalids wheeled along in chairs, babies in their white carriages. She saw him coming, far up, a gleam of scarlet. He came nearer, walking slowly, straight through the crowd. The low sunlight glowed on his bare head goldenly. He had a gray sweater over one shoulder, and he walked with his head bent slightly, as though he were thinking about something, not seeing the people about him. He passed, looking down, not seeing Dorothy. Many people, as always, turned to look after him. She saw these glances—in particular she saw one woman look after him in a way that roused a sudden fierce emotion in her. She too followed him with her eyes. And it seemed to her that he was going away, out of her life, he was going farther and farther away, and he had not seen her. . . .

She threw herself on the sand and hid her face. It was like a great wave sweeping over her, the strength of her passion for him. It was sweeping her away, breaking all her moorings of reason, making everything seem of no account beside this one desire. She could never let him go. . . .

What matter if he did not care as she did? At least, he would be near her, and he had said he did care for her, and he would perhaps love her. . . . And all the practical difficulties could be got through, they could live somehow. . . . As for other people, her life was her own, she could not give it up. . . .

She lay there, digging her fingers into the sand, suffering, in a fierce tumult of feeling. Never could she get from him what she wanted, she knew it, he had not that feeling to give. She saw torment for herself and for him. She must thrust herself upon him—and then would begin the struggle to keep him. That woman's look had shown her that there were things she could not bear. . . .

It was too strong. Once more she felt how much she had yielded, how much she had given herself. She felt with anguish that she could not control this force, that it mastered her and was sweeping her out like a weed on the water, that she was powerless, defenseless, and in danger. . . .

It was a longing that she could not fight against—a longing for his touch, his caress—for the outward semblance, the sign of something that could never be. . . .

She lay there, with the murmur of voices and passing of people about

her, sobbing under her breath. Something cold touched her foot, and she sat up to see that she must give back once more before the incoming tide. She moved back to the shelter of the board-walk, beyond high-water mark. The wind was blowing now in strength and the waves were high. She was chilled, and shivered, but she could not go back yet to the house. She clasped her hands about her knees and sat watching the sea. It was rough now, sombre in color, unfriendly, menacing. The bathers had all left this part of the beach, and the boats had gone. The sea was solitary, rolling without break to the horizon line, vast and dark under the clouding sky.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOME men passed, running toward the Casino, making a clatter on the board-walk over her head. She heard shouting far down the beach, and, looking that way, saw a crowd gathering at the water-line. In a few moments the crowd was dense, and people came running down across the walk to join it. Then she saw them give back confusedly, and a dark mass moved swiftly down across the sand into the water. It was the life-boat from the lower station being run out.

She was on her feet now, watching, with a vague sense of calamity.

The boat shot out into the water, with eight men at the oars and one steering. It tossed up and down in the surf. On the sand the crowd undulated and gesticulated. A hoarse murmur from it was borne toward her on the wind.

She began to walk toward it, at first slowly, then swiftly, her light dress and dishevelled hair blown about her. As she came nearer, the sense of what had happened became definite. Some one was drowning out there. The faces of the people were turned all toward a certain spot far out beyond the life-lines. The boat seemed now merely crawling through the water, making for that spot. The waves were high about it and foaming.

She asked the first person she came to and got an anxious shrill answer.

"Yes, there's a man or two men out there—carried out by the undertow. Two of 'em were swimming 'way out. Perhaps one got in, I don't know—they say a life-guard went after the other——"

She pushed farther into the crowd and asked again and got the same vague reply.

"They say it's a man and a woman—I don't know. The sea's running terribly strong now. I'm afraid they've gone down——"

She heard the word "life-guard" several times. Yes, a life-guard had gone out, without waiting for the boat. A few minutes ago you could see them, out beyond that buoy. Now the waves were so high——

She looked up at the bathing-pavilion, about which the crowd was gathered. At the top of the steps stood the proprietor of the swimming-pool, a stout man in shirt-sleeves, gesticulating solemnly. She made her

way up to him and questioned him sharply. He looked at her vaguely, not recognizing her in his worry.

"I don't know who it is—some stranger, went in from here. Yes, a guard went after him when they gave the alarm—not the reg'lar man from the station here—it was that big fellow from the Casino, Robertson—he just happened to be here, and he did n't lose no time—jumped in the way he was, half-dressed. It's a wonder they would n't make a little better time with that boat."

She shrank against the doorway beside him, staring out over the heads of the crowd. A black, surging mass, with pale blurs for faces, all shouting meaningless things . . . and out there the boat driving through the foam . . . and the wind blowing the salt spray against her face. . . .

Now the boat was turning, making a wide circle . . . circling, circling about. . . .

She grasped fiercely at the stout man's arm.

"What's the matter?" she cried in his ear. "Can't they see them?"

He shook his head helplessly and would not answer.

And the boat turned and turned, moving this way and that, it seemed aimlessly, at a loss. . . .

"But he could n't have gone down!" she cried, shaking that fat, puffy arm furiously. "He's a strong swimmer!"

He twitched away from her.

"I dunno," he said uneasily. "The other feller might've pulled him under. It looks bad."

She fell back against the doorway.

"There comes the other boat!" cried some one.

It was the boat from the Casino, lighter and smaller, with three men in it. And now the two boats took up the search, sweeping in wider circles, crossing and recrossing. They were barely visible now in the gathering darkness. Soon they could not be seen at all, only a tossing light marked the position of each, and the two lights wandered hopelessly. . . .

Now it was quite dark. There were lanterns, little spots of light, in the crowd, and the electric lights along the walk flashed out a blue, hard glare. Dorothy was down in the crowd at the edge of the water. She was there when one of the boats pulled in, a vague shape appearing out of darkness, and the men leaped out of it into the surf and ran it up the beach. A low murmur greeted them, and they were silent. She heard one man near her say:

"They must have gone down at once. . . . The boat's been out over an hour. . . ."

The other boat was still out there. She could see its light dimly. Stumbling along in the wet sand, she followed it. It was going slowly, away, away. . . .

Several times she fell, but always rose again and went on after the light that now was ahead of her, going more swiftly. She began to run. . . .

When she came abreast of the Casino, the boat was already beached, and here, too, people had gathered. She went up to one of the men, who was taking the tackle out of the boat.

"You did n't find him?" she said sharply.

The man shook his head.

"But are you giving up—are you going to leave him like that? . . . I'll pay you anything you want to go out again—go out—stay there all night if necessary—go——"

The man said gently:

"It's no use, lady. We'd have got 'em if they had n't been gone down before we got there. I'd stay out all right if there was any chance; but there ain't."

She began to argue and appeal. Suddenly some one came running up to her.

"Dorothy! I've been everywhere for you! Come, my poor child, come——"

"George," she said faintly, "they say he's drowned."

"I know. Come, Dorothy."

She dropped senseless against his breast.



SCENT OF CLOVER

BY ALICE E. ALLEN

WHEN the days go their ways veiled in soft midsummer haze,
Scent of clover wafted over from the fields where cattle graze,
Wakes a riot in the quiet of my heart's accustomed beat,—
Oh, to follow through the hollow of the hills the river fleet!

Like a song, all day long, tripping glad and free and strong,
In blithe measure, bent on pleasure, with me unseen feet would throng;
Love and laughter follow after; whispers thrill me with some dream
Long since banished, not quite vanished, from some other life, 't would
seem.

Day far spent, in the scent of the pines I'd pitch my tent,
Where the murmur—fainter, firmer—of the stream seemed half lament
For that distant preëxistent life; and far-off stars would glow
With the tender, softened splendor of dear eyes I used to know!

KIPLING'S CONCEPTION OF INDIA

By an Indian Student

THOSE who in the early nineties hailed Mr. Kipling as a second and "stronger Dickens, going forth conquering and to conquer," are heard no more. The tricks of style, and the note of blatant imperialism, which captured the imagination of the reading public, and elevated him with startling suddenness to the front rank of writers of the day, have somewhat lost their glamour, and with the march of time his work has fallen into a more proper perspective. It would be interesting to inquire into the causes which brought about Kipling's rise to fame, and to speculate upon the verdict which posterity will pronounce upon his works. But I am more immediately concerned with what he wrote about India, the land of his birth and early struggles, and I shall, therefore, confine myself strictly to a criticism of his views of Indian life and character.

It was in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century that the affairs of India began slowly to emerge from the obscurity which surrounded them, and to engage the attention of the British public. Before that, the number of those who possessed even the most elementary knowledge about her, was very small indeed. The stay-at-home Englishman was content to leave the affairs of the empire in the hands of a small band of his countrymen, who, it must be said, managed them on the whole with remarkable success; and so long as the wheels of administration ran smoothly, no one cared to trouble his head about what at best was a very complex problem. All that, as I have stated, is slowly changing, and the Englishman's interest in his Eastern possessions has ceased to be wholly detached or academical. Among the agencies which have contributed to this result, we may justly place the efforts of a long line of Anglo-Indian writers, who have striven, according to their measure, to bring before the minds of their countrymen the glamour and the glory of the East. It may be said without offense that much of what has been written upon the subject, when it has failed to mislead, has but served to amuse. But there has not been wanting work that will abide, and the names of Lyall, Mackay, Birdwood, and Meadows

Taylor, to mention just a few, will always command respect. In the very front rank of these chroniclers of Indian life, stands Rudyard Kipling.

Born at Bombay in 1865, Kipling spent the first years of his childhood in India, which he left at the age of five. He returned when he was still in his teens, to serve on the staff of one of the leading Anglo-Indian journals. His career as a journalist does not seem to have been very successful. But if he did not write leaders that carried consternation into the heart of Simla, or created a storm on the banks of the Hooghly, he certainly kept his eyes wide open, and travelled and saw a good deal. The result is apparent in the works which he gave to the world, which betray a knowledge of the habits and customs of the East, which few of his predecessors or contemporaries can be said to have possessed. The romance and beauty of the land, the strange rites and usages of its people, their ancient philosophy and their proud traditions, their patient toil and their simple lives, all these he has depicted in language by no means conspicuous for purity or refinement, but which by its rugged strength, its quaint turns of speech, and its peculiarly oriental mould, served all the better to bring home to its readers the scenes and persons described. In view of the criticisms which follow, this acknowledgment is the more readily made. However grievously Kipling may have erred when trying to penetrate beneath the surface, his pictures of Indian life breathe something of the spirit of the East. They are not the grotesque and hideous caricatures with which a later generation of writers has sought to amuse an uncritical and unsuspecting public.

How far has Kipling succeeded in entering into the real life of the people, and arriving at a correct appreciation of some of the problems of our Indian Empire? Let me begin with those famous lines which represent Kipling's views on the nature and character of Eastern and Western civilizations, and which have become almost a gospel of faith with the vast majority of those who have paid any thought to the subject.

East is East, and West is West,
And ne'er the twain shall meet.

The note struck by these lines suggests that some insuperable barriers divide the East from the West, and that, however intimate a connection between the two civilizations might be formed, an eternal distinction must exist between them. In other words, it is asserted that the West can have no real or permanent influence upon the East, however closely the civilization of the one may be assimilated by the other. The grounds on which this belief is held are partly historical, and partly based on experience and observation. The former I need not discuss; the latter

resolve themselves into two arguments. First, we are told that the number of those Orientals who have acquired Western culture is very small. And, secondly, the class which has adopted the civilization of the West is not Western at heart; that is, that the culture it has acquired is merely on the surface. The conclusion which we therefore are invited to draw is that the influence of the West upon the East can never be real or permanent.

Both these propositions may be briefly controverted. To say that the educated class can never be large enough to control the destiny of the country, proceeds upon an assumption which neither history nor experience warrants. It must not be forgotten, besides, that the really educated classes are always in a minority everywhere, Europe not excepted. Then, with regard to the assertion that the Oriental's culture is merely skin-deep, the underlying idea seems to be that every point of distinction between the two peoples should vanish when the civilization of the one brings its influence to bear upon that of the other. The popular mind would appear to be incapable of striking a middle path. Either Western influence must be *nil*, or it must efface every vestige of distinction. Either India must be made an exact duplicate of England, or India's progress towards Western ideals must be pronounced a rank delusion. To this line of argument, the best answer I can give is a quotation from a series of excellent articles on the subject from the pen of Mr. Edwin Bevan. Says he:

When a system of thought and life passes from one people to another, it is obvious that it does not pass in a single block, to be taken or rejected whole. It is plain that some parts of it are much more easily transmissible than others, and that among the most easily transmissible parts are phrases and catchwords. The transmission of intellectual habit is harder, and that of moral much harder still. Under these conditions, what else could take place except that the more easily transmissible parts should in many quarters outstrip the less transmissible, that there should be all degrees of imperfect assimilation between the fullest apprehension and total unreceptiveness. The fluent and superficial Oriental is a type which exists, and observers who judge things grossly and in the lump, who deal in generalizations about "the Oriental," take him for representative, just as certain displeasing types of Englishmen are apt to be taken as representative by those who do not love us.

Further down, when dealing specifically with the charge that the Indian's assimilation of Western culture is very superficial, Mr. Bevan remarks:

No one who knows anything of the inconsistencies and fluctuations of human nature could expect that a new form of culture would advance among any people, with no revulsion, with no inner conflict, with no

retrogressions. As if there were no cases in Europe where a man's traditional beliefs subsisted illogically alongside of his acquired intellectual notions! Or, as if a doctrine once professed always in England continued to dominate every moment of a man's life thenceforward without question! But people seem to lose all their common sense and understanding of human nature where the Oriental is concerned.

The conclusion of the matter is that it is foolish to assume that Western civilization can never make headway in the East, merely because the class that has come under its sway is numerically small, and has at times exhibited a tendency to break away from its influences. Customs, traditions, and beliefs which date from hoary antiquity cannot be supplanted within the short space of a century. Nor will their total disappearance—which, however, will never come to pass—be a matter for rejoicing. The West, if it has much to teach, has something to learn. The birthplace of profound philosophies and great religions, the East can still initiate the West into some aspects of the higher life which the materialism of the latter has taught it to overlook. When the contact between the two becomes closer and more intimate, it may be that the Rationalism of the West will be tempered by the Spiritualism of the East, and out of their mutual action and reaction will be evolved a type of civilization higher and nobler than any the world has yet witnessed.

Closely arising out of this topic is that which deals with the supposed inscrutability of the Oriental mind. You will never really understand him, you will be told, if in your thirst for knowledge you attempt to fathom the depths of his nature. He is beyond you. As Kipling in one of his "Departmental Ditties" puts it:

You'll never plumb the Oriental mind.
And if you did, it is n't worth the toil.
Think of a sleek French priest in Canada;
Divide by twenty half-breeds. Multiply
By twice the Sphinx's silence. There's your East,
And you're as wise as ever.

People who talk in this vein forget that their ignorance is due not to any difficulty which is inherent in the nature of the subject and is insuperable, but is the result of their inability to enter sympathetically into the feelings of a people whose ways of life and modes of thought are different from their own. You cannot know much of the real mind of a people if you start with the assumption of your own superiority, mental, moral and intellectual, and proceed to dub all that does not fit in with your pet notions of things as worthy merely of pity or ridicule. If you wish to learn, leave your insular prejudices behind. It is always difficult to enter into the thoughts or feelings of those whose

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mental structure is different from our own. Do not aggravate that difficulty by want of sympathy, and by a predilection to be led away by the surface view of things. If you inquire in the right spirit, making allowances for differences of environment and upbringing, you will find that very often the Oriental is guided by the same considerations as those which influence the conduct of the men and women of the West. You will also probably find that "the contrast is not merely between peoples of different blood and habitation, but between peoples at different stages of development. Qualities which are ascribed with an unreflecting readiness to the Oriental often turn out on inspection to be not in the least peculiar to the East, but qualities universal among peoples at a more primitive stage. Many of them might have been discovered just as much in medieval Europe. The Crusaders would find it much easier to enter into the feelings of many Oriental peoples to-day than into those of their own descendants in France or Germany."

Turn we now to something in a lighter vein. Let us hear what Kipling has to say of the cold-weather tourist, who rushes through India with a pen and a camera, and goes home and writes a book thereon. He is immortalized in more than one place, notably in those verses which chronicle the doings of "Pagett, M.P." The last verse well expresses the feelings with which the seasoned Anglo-Indian regards the species:

And I laughed as I drove from the station, but the mirth died out on my lips
As I thought of the fools like Pagett who write of their "Eastern trips,"
And the sneers of the travelled idiots who duly misgovern the land,
And I prayed to the Lord to deliver another one into my hand.

When Kipling wrote these lines, the subject had not assumed the importance it subsequently has. The "six weeks' expert," anathematized by Lord Morley, had not yet become the familiar figure which a later generation has cause to remember. But it is a far cry from Kipling's days, and among other manifestations of the growing interest of England in her Indian empire we have now annually a large crop of cold-weather tourists, consumed with a commendable eagerness to enlighten their less fortunate countrymen at home. Strange and startling at times are the workings of their minds, and well may the dweller within our shores pray for deliverance. But while it may be legitimate to indulge in a mild chaff at the expense of itinerant politicians, and to accept their lucubrations with reserve, we cannot too strongly condemn the fashion of regarding their utterance as worthless *solely* because they are the outcome of a not very close first-hand acquaintance. Our author could never forgive them, and he has another hit at them in one of those interesting sketches narrating his travels and entitled "From Sea to Sea." He says at the end of his wanderings in India:

Then came by the person that I most hate—a globe-trotter. He, sitting in my chair, discussed India with the unbridled arrogance of five weeks on a Cook's ticket. He was from England and dropped his manners in the Suez Canal. "I assure you," said he, "that you who live so close to the actual facts of things cannot form dispassionate judgments of their merits. You are too near. Now I——" he waved his hand modestly and left me to fill the gap. I considered him from his new helmet to his deck-shoes, and I perceived that he was but an ordinary man. I thought of India, maligned and silent India, given up to the ill-considered wanderings of such as he, of the land whose people are too busy to reply to the libels upon their life and manners.

All this is very fine, and we are thankful to the poet for his sympathy. But the fact remains that not infrequently more things are visible to the fresh eye than are seen by those whose vision is obscured by disappointments or prejudices; and I would much sooner go for instruction to men like Mr. Ramsay MacDonald than to any number of old stagers who can boast of their thirty or forty years' experiences. Of course, other things being equal—gift of perception and the like—the old resident is certainly a more reliable guide. All that I say is that it is not an all-sufficient argument to advance against a writer that he has been only a few months in the country. Lord Morley, who had never even seen India, seemed to have grasped the problems of the empire with a much surer insight than have hundreds of those who have spent their lifetime in the country.

Among the many and complex problems which constantly confront English statesmen in the governance of the Indian empire, the question of the general poverty of the land stands in the very forefront. Changes in the constitution, and in the rights and privileges of the people of the country, and other like subjects, have often in the past tended to occupy the vision to the exclusion of everything else. But you have ultimately to come back to the question of the Poverty of India as the most vital to the interests of the people. Books have been written upon the subject, and more amazing nonsense has been talked about it than about any other. I was curious to learn whether Kipling had anything to say about it, and I came across his views in a corner of those sketches "From Sea to Sea," to which I have already referred. He discourses on the relative merits of British and Native States' administration, and retails to us a very interesting conversation he had with an "intelligent loafer." This is what the last-named personage told our author, among other entertaining things:

"Why, I'd undertake to raise a hundred million—what am I talking of?—a hundred and fifty million pounds from this country per annum, and it would n't be strained then. One hundred and fifty millions you could raise as easy as paint, if you just made these 'ere Injians

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understand that they had to pay an' make no bones about it. It's enough to make a man sick to go in over yonder to — and see what they do. Perfectly sickenin' it is. Borrer money? Why, the country could pay herself an' everything she wants, if she was only made to do it. It's this bloomin' *Garib Admi** swindle that's been going on all these years, that has made fools o' the Guv'ment."

Our author informs us that he dissented from the speaker and the brutal cruelty with which his views were stated, but an unscientific impression nevertheless remained not to be shaken off. He goes on to tell us that one felt that across the border the country was being used and exploited mercilessly, and that "in our territories the feeling is equally strong of wealth 'just round the corner,' as the loafer said, of a people wrapped up in cotton wool and ungetatable." We may take it then that Kipling is inclined to indorse, in part, at least, what the "loafer" said about the wealth of the land. To any one who has made a study of the subject, the theory that there is money enough in the country if only one knew how to get at it, is too ridiculous for words. It is impossible in the space of this article to deal with the question, and I shall leave it where it stands, merely asking those who are inclined to agree with the views set out above to study the conditions under which the people live, their patient toil, their frugal lives, their chronic indebtedness, and their woeful plight when the seasons fail and Famine is at their door. When two-thirds of the entire population live on agriculture, and are dependent upon the caprices of a monsoon which has not infrequently failed in the past, bringing untold calamity on the land, to talk of wealth "just round the corner" is rank nonsense.

Let us hear now what the poet has to say about that much-discussed topic "the white man's burden." In "The City of Dreadful Night" he speaks of the Anglo-Indian's lost heritage:

And we, we have nothing except the few amusements that we painfully build up for ourselves, the dolorous dissipations of gymkhanas where every one knows everybody else, or the chastened intoxication of dances where all engagements are booked, in ink, ten days ahead, and where everybody's antecedents are as patent as his or her method of waltzing. We have been deprived of our inheritance. The men at home are enjoying it all, not knowing how fair and rich it is, and we at the most can only fly westward for a few months, and gorge what, properly speaking, should take seven or eight or ten luxurious years. That is the lost heritage of London; and the knowledge of the forfeiture, wilful or forced, comes to most men at times and seasons, and they get cross.

Elsewhere, the poet sings, in a less restrained manner, of the woes of his countrymen exiled in the East. The subject is delicate, and I

* Poor man.

shall handle it here very briefly. Without seeking to minimize the disadvantages and miseries of an exile from home, without attempting to ignore the splendid and devoted service which so many Englishmen have given to this country since the British empire laid its foundations in the land, I ask if it be always the clarion call of duty, and never the promptings of self-interest, that has drawn to India generations of English men and women. Has India done nothing for England that a certain section of Englishmen should perpetually prate of the "white man's burden"? India maintains an army of 75,000 white men upon whom England can draw whenever and wherever her interests are at stake. It was this very army that saved Britain's honor in South Africa, being the first to reach the field of operations. Again, India is the largest customer of Great Britain, a fact which is sometimes overlooked. In these days of keen commercial rivalry, the value of our markets to the old country can scarcely be overrated. Besides this, India offers careers such as are not possible anywhere else. Power such as many European princes might envy, and salaries often greater than what Cabinet Ministers might draw, and much else besides, are within the grasp of every youth that comes out to this country to serve his King. Is that little? Then, again, think of the vast wealth that has flowed to England from India's shores since Clive laid the foundations of British power in the East. To students of Indian politics, the "drain" theory is familiar. Personally, I do not hold fast by it "in toto." But, apart from the sum which India pays annually by way of interest on loans for productive works, consider the wealth in the shape of pensions, etc., which goes out of the country every year, and for which there is no return to her of any kind whatever. Of course, this is an evil inseparable from a foreign dominion, but there it stands. The money that is earned in this country by the Englishman—by the sweat of his brow, be it admitted—is spent in England in retirement, and is lost to this country forever. As I have said, all this is inevitable, and India in her turn has also much to be grateful for; but then why talk of the "burden"? Do we not offer you recompense enough for the sorrows and miseries of exile from health and home? It is time these facts were recognized, and the absurd cry of the "white man's burden" consigned to its proper place among the shibboleths and catch-words which pass current in our day for political wisdom.

There are many other topics of interest scattered throughout Kipling's works, but I have not space to deal with them all. The Native States come in occasionally for a flattering notice, and comparisons with British administration are drawn which ought to interest the Indian princes. In one place we are told that "a year spent among the Native States ought to send a man back to the Decencies and the Law Courts and the Rights of the Subject with a supreme contempt for those who

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rave about the oppressions of our brutal bureaucracy." The Native States have certainly sinned grievously in the past, when the rulers were not enlightened and political agents not so masterful as they are nowadays; but, considering the way they have been generally treated by travellers and writers, we offer them our sympathy. The Native Press, too, may be consoled with, for it has had to live down much calumny and abuse. Our author does not spare it either. Talking of Rajputana, he observes:

A "free press" is not allowed, and this the native journalist knows. With good management he can, keeping under the shadow of our flag, raise two hundred rupees from a big man here, and five hundred from a rich man there, but he does not establish himself across the Border. To one who has reason to hold a stubborn disbelief in even the elementary morality of the native press, this bashfulness and lack of enterprise is amusing.

A little gently, O cocksure Rudyard! The native press has lived down calumnies worse than thine, and flourishes like the green bay-tree. To come down to less weighty topics, it is amusing to read that kissing is generally not known in India! Equally interesting is the statement—which, though meant as a joke, has some truth in it, to be sure—that the Indian Civil Service is a Service "that ought to be able to command the Channel Fleet or set a leg at twenty minutes' notice"! But regretfully I must take leave of these and many other statements, found scattered throughout the Indian works, dealing with the social and political life of the country. This I will add, that if Kipling were to see the India of to-day, he would probably sing to a different tune.

I have attempted in this short sketch to show how accurate or otherwise are some of Kipling's conceptions of the land and its people. Divorced from all matter of a controversial nature, his pictures of Indian life betray an intimate acquaintance with the subject, and charm one by their freshness and originality. Whether he deals with the life of the gods who dwell on the Olympic heights of Simla, or the humble existence of the toiler in the plains and the mountains, the touch is there which brings home to the reader the magic and mystery of the East. We feel somehow that India is truly a land of romance, a great and wonderful land, where side by side the highest and lowest types of civilization may be found, and which, under the Englishman's firm and beneficent sway, is slowly attaining to a greatness far transcending any her stormy history has witnessed.



THE CHILD THAT WAS TAKEN TO RAISE

By Elsie Singmaster

Author of "Their Great Inheritance," etc.

"OH, my soul! oh, my soul! oh, my soul!" Like a crazy person—Millerstown would have said "like a schpook"—poor Lizie Schaup roamed through her mistress's house, up and down the steps, from the stiff parlor out to the spotless kitchen, then down the smoothly scrubbed board-walk to the barn, then out to the gate. She knew every crack in every board in the house, she had set out with her own hands every plant in the garden, she had washed and ironed every sheet and towel, washed and dried every dish, and never from the day that she came from the poorhouse at sixteen until the present moment when she was sixty had she broken even a tumbler. She had helped to nurse "him," her mistress's husband, in his last illness, she had prepared the bodies of her mistress's children for burial, she had been at once a daughter, a sister, and a servant.

"Lizie!"

Some one was calling her sharply; her back straightened as though jerked at the end of a string, her chin set itself. She saw Sarah Knerr peering between the lilac bushes.

"Where did she go?" asked Sarah Knerr.

Poor Lizie's back grew even straighter.

"She went off."

"Is it so that she went to the station to fetch the lawyer? Is it so that she will take a child to raise? Is it so that it will be a Diller?"

Poor Lizie's head went back another inch. It was all true, alas, alas! But Sarah Knerr's curiosity need not be gratified yet. Lizie answered shrilly:

"She does not have me to tell her business to strangers."

Sarah Knerr laughed. She had been born in the next house, she had known Lizie and her mistress all her life.

"You'll get over your ugliness when the Dillers come in, Lizie Schaup."

"Since when are the Dillers coming in?"

"Well, if it is n't the Dillers, it will be the Wagners or the Kolbs

or the Prutzmans—it has to be one of those four that is adopted. They are her only near relatives. I guess——”

Sarah Knerr's guesses were wasted on the air. Poor Lizie had vanished. She went into the stiff, grand parlor and sat down, rocking her body back and forth in her misery. She was a little, thin woman; sometimes, in moments of fanatic passion for cleanliness, when, scrub-brush in hand, she scoured the pavement or the outside of the house, she looked wild. Now, desperate, frightened, she might have been thought mad.

“The Dillers or the Wagners or the Kolbs or the Prutzmans,” she repeated aloud. “Swully Diller is as thin as a thorn—they are always ugly when they are so thin. John Wagner is fat as a pig and dull as an ox, and he would never wipe his shoes while the world stands. The Prutzmans—they are all big-feeling, and the Kolbs, they are all mean. *Ach, Elend, Elend!* why does she do it, then?”

Seeing that one shade hung unevenly, poor Lizie rose and rolled it up and down, trying to straighten it. Finally the cord slipped from her hand, the curtain snapped to the top of the window and stayed there. Each one of the four nieces of Lizie's mistress would see it when she came in. Fat Emmeline Diller would make a “tchk” with her tongue and teeth, loud-voiced Mary Wagner would scornfully direct her husband's attention to it, tall, thin Dillie Prutzman would order poor Lizie to adjust it.

“You are not my boss *yet!*” poor Lizie would answer wildly.

Already they were coming up the street, dressed in their best, stared at by the neighbors. There were four nieces, four stupid nephews-in-law, four grandnephews, all bursting with curiosity and anxiety and fear. “Aunt Mena” was about to adopt a son to take the place of the children who had died, to be given her name, to inherit her wealth, almost the greatest in Millerstown. Emmeline Diller had put the notion into her head, first by sly hints, then by open suggestion, finally by frank coaxing. “Swully”—the boy's name was really Walter; Millerstown has barbarous nicknames—Swully was the oldest of eight children, he was smart, he ought to have an education, which she and her husband could not give him. He might even make a preacher—think how fine it would be to have a preacher in the family! She mentioned even his thinness as an argument, as though she and her husband could not feed him.

Aunt Mena had made her crazy with delight. She had agreed entirely. It was true that she had no direct heir to inherit her money. It was true that she was growing old. It was true that she had recently had a long sickness, and that she might “go off” suddenly. It would be a splendid thing to take a boy to raise.

But Emmeline's happiness was short-lived. She discovered that John Wagner and Israel Kolb and Frankie Prutzman had each been offered

by his mother. She said then to Aunt Mena that it would be much better to divide her money among her four nieces. "Like the china set," she said.

A queer glitter had come into Aunt Mena's eyes.

"China sets are different," she had said. "You can't divide a house in pieces, and you can't divide a lot when the house stands in the middle. The thing is to take a child to raise."

Poor Lizie heard the creak of the gate. The nieces were at hand. She rushed wildly to the kitchen, that loved, spotless home of her happiness, and looked about. It would never be the same, never, never. The adopted son was to come there to live; whether Diller, Wagner, Prutzman, or Kolb, he would be intolerable. The house would never again be clean or quiet. Besides, they might drive her away, and she had nowhere to go. But there was no time now to think of that.

She heard their footsteps on the porch. She flung out her arms, then crazily she stooped and kissed the handle of the tea-kettle. She had grown to believe that all these things were hers.

She reached the front door in time to open it to her mistress's guests. They were all solemn, all important; since the last Weimer funeral, none of them had come to the front door. This was a great occasion. Emmeline Diller did not glance at Lizie as she stood in her blue calico dress and her white apron against the wall, Lizzie Kolb said, "Well," Dillie Prutzman smiled with haughty, twisted mouth. Swully attempted to step on Lizie's foot as he passed. John Wagner asked whether there were doughnuts to be had. She was no more to any of them than a piece of furniture. Two of the nieces had decided to keep her after they moved in—at least, as long as she could work. The other two planned to dismiss her at once.

Against each side of the parlor wall, Lizie had set three chairs, according to her mistress's directions. The Prutzmans sat to the north, the Wagners to the south, the Dillers and Kolbs to east and west. In the centre of the room stood a marble-topped table, on it were pens and paper, beside it two chairs, one for Aunt Mena, one for the lawyer who was coming from town. Aunt Mena was the most formal and exacting person in Millerstown, and she was now planning to bring riot into her house.

There was no place for poor Lizie to sit, but she did not go. She stood in the doorway, a hand on each jamb, a poor Samson in the midst of the Philistines.

The nieces paid no heed to her, their eyes were glued to the corner cupboard, where, in unbroken perfection, stood Aunt Mena's Wedgwood set. Not a piece was nicked, not one missing from the dozens of plates and cups and saucers. There were four platters, one with a deep gray ditch, there was a great, broad-bodied tea-pot, with its attendant cream

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pitcher and sugar bowl, perfect in form, exquisite in their clear white and blue. The set was Aunt Mena's most valuable personal possession, it was perhaps the most valuable possession in Millerstown. It was to be divided among the four women who eyed it so hungrily, and it was to go to their children after them. Not a piece was even to be given away. Aunt Mena had great family pride—it was that which made her adoption of a son so certain. In the eyes of each niece, her own son was a god among his cousins.

"And Aunt Mena," said Mary Wagner, giving complacent expression to part of her thoughts—"Aunt Mena will see what is best. She is pretty smart yet."

Aunt Mena might still be smart, but she was no longer either young or well. The young lawyer from the county seat put a supporting hand under her elbow as they came together into the room. Poor Lizzie, her eyes fixed watchfully and in terror and foreboding upon the nieces, did not hear them until the lawyer asked her to let them pass. Then she stepped back with a gasp.

Old Aunt Mena was white and bent, with bright eyes and a set mouth. She bore bravely the burden of her years and her many sorrows. She walked past poor Lizzie without looking at her, and the lawyer followed her. His expression was non-committal. He looked at them all and bowed, even to the servant standing in the doorway. It is probable that he had never had such a case before. He put old Aunt Mena into her chair with an air of courteous respect which made the men in the room gape at him and the boys snicker and the women sit up a little straighter in their chairs. Then he sat down beside her.

He took no papers from his pocket, he simply sat still, waiting for Aunt Mena to begin. Emmeline Diller thought she would help out the situation: she presented to the lawyer her husband and her son. Mrs. Wagner and Mrs. Prutzman and Mrs. Kolb also introduced their husbands and sons. The men said stiffly, "Pleased to meet you," the boys squirmed in their chairs. They all began to be a little frightened.

Then Aunt Mena began to speak. Her voice, tremulous at first, strengthened as she went on.

"I was eighty years old this March," she began. "I have not so many years to live any more."

"Ach, Aunty!" murmured Mrs. Diller pityingly.

"You must n't talk that way, Aunty," whimpered Mrs. Kolb.

Aunt Mena paid no heed.

"My man left me well off, and somebody must have all these things. There is this house and the lot and the barn and the furniture and the china set and the money in the bank. It is all in all worth about thirty thousand dollars."

The nieces were almost paralyzed.

"What!" cried Mrs. Diller.

"Ach, Auntie!" Mrs. Prutzman's delighted exclamation was almost a squeal.

"Now, this must be given to somebody. Emmeline and Lizzie and Mary and Dillie each think I should take a child to raise and give him my name, so that the name shall last a while yet. That is what I think I will do. I have picked out already the one for whom I will do this. It is all to be done right, and each one is to know before I die where she stands, so that there shall be no fighting. Everything shall be fixed. He"—she nodded toward the young lawyer—"he will see that everything is right. Emmeline, do you believe that I am yet in my right mind?"

Emmeline laughed in sudden, blessed surety.

"Of course you are, Auntie!"

Then Emmeline's heart sank. One by one her cousins were similarly questioned and responded as heartily. Then Aunt Mena spoke again, this time a little more sharply:

"It was a time when you did not think so, any of you."

The nieces flushed scarlet. Six months ago Aunt Mena had been ill and they had crowded jealously to her bedside. They had thought that she was going to die, they had thought for two days that she would never rouse from the unconscious state in which she lay. And they had talked and talked and talked, watching with her at night. There was nothing that they did not say. It was before the scheme of adoption had entered the head of any of them; they had divided her property among them. Then, suddenly, they had realized that Aunt Mena's eyes were open, that she was awake. But she had heard nothing—they were sure that she had heard nothing. Only now they began to be a little frightened.

"You talked when I was sick," said Aunt Mena. "You said that a man had come while I was sick and had offered six hundred dollars for the china set. You promised together to sell it to him after I was dead. Each one was to sell her share."

"It was n't me, it——" began Emmeline Diller.

"I said all along——" interrupted Mary Wagner.

"We did n't——" thrust in Lizzie Kolb.

Aunt Mena raised a frail hand.

"You need n't say what you said or what you did n't say. I heard what you said. I saw that man afterwards. I hunted him up. It is all fixed. A museum is to have the china set. He was buying it for a museum. I am going to give it to the museum. The museum does not need to pay a cent for it. It will all be kept together. It will have a name over it in large letters, 'Gift of Mena Weimer, Millerstown.'"

"To will it out of the family!" cried Lizzie Kolb.

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"Aunt Mena!" protested Mary Wagner.

"But you promised it to us!" declared Dillie Prutzman.

Aunt Mena wasted no time in answering argument with fact. Afterwards, they would have time to discover the ridiculousness of their protests.

The women's eyes sought one another in dismay and anger. Their husbands stared helplessly at the floor, their sons continued the series of insane grimaces which they were making at one another after the manner of their kind. Swully Diller stretched his long legs in a vain effort to reach poor Lizzie's foot. Lizzie still stood in the doorway. She had resumed her Samson-like attitude, her eyes were upon her frail, stubborn mistress whom she loved.

Suddenly Aunt Mena turned and looked at her.

"Do you think I am in my right mind, Lizzie?" she asked.

Lizzie's hands loosened their clasp of the door-frame and clutched each other.

"Ach, Mena!" she cried. There are few titles in Millerstown, even between maid and mistress. "Ach, Mena! I—I guess so, Mena." Then poor Lizzie hesitated. There had always been perfect openness between them. "I—I am not sure, Mena!"

The nieces shrieked out their horror and disapproval.

"You'd better clear out, Lizzie Schaup," cried Emmeline.

"*You are not sure, Lizzie?*" repeated Aunt Mena.

"I thought you were, Mena," wailed poor Lizzie. "Indeed, I thought you were. But now I do not know. Don't have any Swully or any Israel Kolb come in till you are dead, Mena. Let them come in then, Mena, if you must, but not now. Mena——" Lizzie took a step forward, then stepped back again and seized the door-frame. "I must talk, Mena. You took me from the poorhouse and you gave me a home, but I must talk. Johnny Wagner, he will eat you out of house and home, Mena, and he will never wipe his shoes. And Israel will bring his dog, and Frankie says nothing all the time but 'Shut up' and 'Hold your mouth' and worse things, and whichever comes will bring his mom and his pop and all his folks and——"

There were stirrings of rage, mutterings, then a chorus of interruptions. Dillie Prutzman's voice rose to a shriek:

"Lizzie Schaup, you lie, you——"

The young lawyer raised his hand.

"Mrs. Weimer asked her to speak," he said sharply. "Go on, Lizzie."

Lizzie did not go on because he bade her, but because she could not help herself. She would have spoken though their voices had drowned hers utterly, though they had attacked her bodily. She had never said her whole mind about them in all her life; the accumulation of speech threatened to burst her.

"They sit up front in the church!" she cried. "They bake ten kinds of fine cakes for the Sunday School picnic, and they have the preacher to sit at their table, Mena. But they went through all the bureau-drawers when you were sick, Mena, they know everything that is in your house. They looked for papers, Mena, they——"

Again the tide of feminine speech swelled furiously. The wild mob at Versailles could have been no more clamorous.

"It is a lie!"

"She is crazy!"

"It is not true!"

"I was awake when you thought I was asleep," reminded Aunt Mena grimly.

Poor Lizie put up her arm as though to shelter herself from blows. She was still brave, still defiant.

"Do not let them come in, Mena," she wailed. "Swully steps on my feet now; he will step on yours till everything is at an end."

The lawyer looked at Aunt Mena, then he laid his hand on her slender arm. It seemed merely a warning gesture. In reality, his fingers pressed the vein in her wrist. Its pulse beat dangerously.

"I'd tell them, Mrs. Weimer," he said gently. "No one will gain anything by putting it off."

Aunt Mena too felt the wild racing of her heart.

"All right," she said slowly. "Then you must go quietly home and do your talking there. Half of my money will go to the church and the orphan asylum. The china set goes as I have said. The other half of the money will come some day to you four. But as long as my child that I take is living, nobody will get anything."

"Your child!" repeated the women, still confused, still furious, but suddenly restored to hope.

"Yes," said Aunt Mena; "I have already taken a child to raise. It is all fixed. The papers are already made out, and it is fixed so nobody can bother my child." Then, cutting the air like the arrows of the returned Ulysses, a single, shrill, excited sentence smote them, nieces and nephews and grandnephews alike: "The child I have taken is Lizie Schaup."



TWILIGHT

BY SARA TEASDALE

THE stately tragedy of dusk
Drew to its perfect close:
The virginal white evening star
Sank, and the red moon rose.

THE MAKINGS OF A HUSBAND

By Edwin Marange

"POLLY!"—it was the voice of Mr. Gambel, from his evening seat on the porch. "Ef here ain't thet long-legged Jim Sprouse comin' agin!"

Mrs. Gambel came to the door, and they both looked into the growing dusk. Behind the long row of chinquapins that bordered the snake fence a slouch hat was rhythmically rising and falling in its progress toward the house.

"Nothin' surprisin' about thet, Dad;" and Mr. Gambel felt a hand stealing through his tousled gray hair. "I reckon you ain't never tuk notice thet ef you hev m'lasses about, flies 'll come to it?"

"One lass seems enough fer this immejit neighborhood, the way she keeps the flies a-buzzin' around," chuckled Mr. Gambel. "Whar's she now?"

"Hus-sh! A-peekin' out the winder in the loft."

Mr. Gambel's snort was muted by his wife's quick hand.

"What's pesterin' me is this pertic'lar fly," he resumed. "He's gittin' so frequent an' plentiful!"

"Jim ain't nowise bad."

"He hain't distinguished himself in wickedness—ner anything else, fer's I know, excep' sparking our Virgy. Drat the fellow; hit's the only thing I ever knowed him to be industr'ous about. This makes the third evenin' this week, Polly." A vexed look of doubt crept over the old man's face as he watched the offending hat, still bobbing up and down behind the chinquapins. "Virgy's encouragin' him, too," he added testily. "She's got nigh shet of all the rest. What ye s'pose she sees in thet young straddle-legs, anyhow?"

"The makin's of a husband, same's I opined I saw in Jared Gambel back in the old Haw Crik days. She's come by her hankerin' fer a hard job natchelly."

By way of return, Jared Gambel made a wry face and a clumsy effort to capture the little, wrinkled brown hand which was pinching his ear. He failed, as he often had, from "Haw Creek days." In a minute the hand came back, as if repentant, and slipped into his. This was the tableau the house-cat, coming suddenly around the corner, gazed upon

with yellow, dilated eyes. Romance not being as much in her line as table scraps, she effaced herself into the savory interior of the kitchen.

"As fer a hard job," pursued Mr. Gambel, returning from a mental trip to Haw Creek, "mebbe you think I did n't hev any? How about Polly Harkness refusin' to say 'yes' or 'no,' from spring to hog-killin' time, an' makin' believe the while she liked two or three other galoots as well? An' after thet war settled, thar was your dad's onreasonable spite agin me which——"

"Hus-sh!" Mrs. Polly tilted her chin toward the loft window. At this moment the gate-bar clicked, whereupon Polly disappeared as had the cat.

"'Evenin', Jim. Hev a seat."

Virgy's sharp-set ears could extract no augury from her father's tone, but she caught the rattle of the chair he kicked toward the visitor, and its creaking protest at Jim's weight. She made no motion to descend, but stood expectantly. It was dusky in her retreat—a herb-perfumed storage place for domestic utensils and Mrs. Gambel's pickles and preserves. The window—a square opening through the logs, its batten shutter upheld by a crooked stick—looked into the antlers of a huge chestnut. Through the frost-thinned foliage the stars sparkled, and the moon's crescent hung low to the darkling bulk of the Blue Ridge. A flock of turkeys—Jim had given Virgy the eggs the previous spring—were grouped, uncouth shapes, along the limbs. Some, disturbed by the clatter below, stretched out long, inquisitive necks, peeping and muttering their suspicions.

The two men gossiped tediously. Two or three women can talk at the same time and quite understand each other. Virgy remembered that men were given to the poky habit of speaking one at a time, and not being in a hurry about that. She sighed, and listened to her mother pattering about, fulfilling the last domestic tasks. She could hear her covering the milk-crocks safe from the cat, brushing the hearth with a bunch of pine "tags," and banking the fire for the night. A little later the bed-cords would creak, announcing her retirement to the four-poster. . . . Would that pesky Jim never get to the point? She made a pantomimic little shove in the dark, as at something inert.

"Virgy?"

It was her mother at the head of the stairs.

The detected eavesdropper turned a confused face.

"Yes, Ma!"

"Come here, Honey."

Something there was unwontedly tender and caressing in the utterance of the familiar words. They seemed to reach across the room and pull Virgy to her mother's arms.

"Oh, Mommie!"

The two women stood thus clasped a little space.

"I s'picioned you'd be gittin' worried about matters, not knowin' your daddy like I do. So I kem up. Men, young or old, is jes' natchel blunder-bodies—we-uns hev to put up with them, like the Lord does. They mean well, even when they's mussin' up things worst possible. . . . Mebbe you'll hev to shed a few tears like your mother afore ye, but hit'll end in smiles, Honey."

"What's Dad spited agin Jim fer, Mommie?"

"He ain't spited. Hit's jes' the man-way of doin' things. Ef they git ideas in their heads, you jes' gotter wait till they work 'em out. Reckon I've said enough. Good-night, Honey!"

Half-way down the ladder-stairs she paused and looked up.

"Don't let yourself git to doubtin' Jim, Virgy. He ain't edzactly like most fellers, but he's sound at the core."

Wondering at such an uncalled-for admonition, Virgy stood listening to her mother's retreating footfalls till they were lost in the depths below. Her reverry was broken in upon by her father's voice rising in assertive asperity.

"Is Dad jawin' him, I wonder?" She reached the window in time to catch, "An' I don't give a chewfer for the whole outfit of yer love-feelin's. Them thar's too common to mention."

Jim's even-toned answer was too low to be heard.

"Heh? . . . Well, mebbe I did. Whut of it? I hed somethin' to offer her mother beyont a passel of soft feelin's. I hed land, a cabin, an' more yit—a habit o' diggin' in the cornfields 'stid of 'sang-diggin' an' skunk-trappin', like you-all does. . . . Whut's thet? . . . You don't? Not even *thet* industrious!"

Mr. Gambel's laugh was as caustic as his words. The listener above could not detect that it raised so much as a ripple on Jim's imperturbability. Still, he must have defended himself, for the old man came back at him: "Shucks! Then you must work o' nights, fer I nowise see you at it daytime! Thar's no use talkin', Jim. . . . Eh? . . . No, I ain't givin' no time-options on Virgy. She's fer the feller thet kin properly pervide fer her, whenever he may chanct along."

So, so! Virgy beat a tattoo on the puncheon floor with one vindictive little foot.

"I've said my say"—Mr. Gambel's voice came up in dogmatic finality—"an' kivered the subject. Now, I don't want ter be oncivil, but hit's my bed-time, Jim."

There were scraping of chair-legs and sounds of rising. . . . A wild insurgence of rebellion against her father's domination rose in Virgy's breast. She stiffened with "Gambel spunk"; her eyes snapped. On this hot mood Jim's cheerfully uttered "Good-night, Mr. Gambel!" as his bull-hide boots went crunching down the gritty path, fell with a chill chagrin. Supinely yielding to her father like that? Winning no con-

ditions, no shadow of a promise, yet marching off in good spirits, as if quite satisfied with affairs—was that all he cared? Her clenched little fists relaxed. She leaned a listless weight against the logs, slowly and bitterly adjusting herself to this new version of her lover. She was charged with quick courage herself; how could a man be a man and be less so? It looked as though his love were of a very tame order. Even as she discussed this with her heart, Jim's flute-like, careless whistle rose far down the chinquapins, where a pair of elastic legs were carrying him home under the blinking stars.

With a dry sob, the girl turned and felt her way to the stair-landing. At sight of it, a dilatory conscience recalled her mother's warning. That had slipped her in the tumult of her emotions. Chin in hand, she sat on the top step and thought out the matter from this fresh angle.

"I reckon Mommie knows men a heap better 'n I do. She's had a lot of experience with 'em—'cordin' to Dad, any way. . . . I 'lowed nobody could teach me anything about Jim. . . . Mommie seemed to jes' know ahead I was goin' to feel an' think this-a-way; how could she tell, I wonder? Anyhow, she's sure to be right, and I'll do what she says." Comforted with this excellent decision, she went to bed.

In the meantime, Mr. Gambel was zestfully rehearsing the late interview to his wife.

"Jim's bodaciously thick-skinned, but I reckon I pricked him to-night," chuckled the father. "Now we'll see if anything happens."

"You'll like es not see somepin' happen you ain't expectin'," was Polly's cryptic remark—one which her husband did not deem sufficiently explicit to discuss.

At noon the next day, Mr. Gambel was enjoying the solace of his corn-cob pipe in his usual seat, when the sound of an axe rang out musically from the upper slope of his farmstead. It was a heavily wooded tract, dear to his eyes. He cocked his ears in the early stirrings of ire.

"Drat it!" he ejaculated, "somebody's choppin' the bee-tree in my woods!" This remark brought Virgy and her mother to the door in prompt inquiry. The group listened with eyes fixed on the timber.

"I don't 'low thet's the bee-tree," doubted Mrs. Gambel. "The choppin' don't seem fer 'nuff to the left fer thet."

Virgy agreed.

"Don't care; hit's axe-cuttin' goin' on, anyways," snapped her father. For some time they listened to the cadence of the steel blade and its far-flung echoes.

"Daddy," exclaimed Virgy presently, extending an excited finger, "ain't the top of the tall poplar nigh the spring a-shakin'?"

"B'lieve hit is," slowly assented Mr. Gambel.

"It sure is. . . . Oh! See, hit's fallin'!"

The straight shaft, executing a graceful arc, swept its plumed top

to the earth in last obeisance. The shock of its death-throe sent a shudder through the rapt noon air. Mr. Gambel hopped to his feet in wrath.

"Gawnamighty! Did ye ever see the like? Ef I don't make thet piratin' skunk pay up fer thet! Whar's my hat?"—and with his hickory cane thumping the ground, Gambel was soon lost to sight among the brush. Virgy's heat at the despoiler was quickly merged in terror for her father as she thus saw him depart in the lust of battle. She could not account for her mother's calmness.

"Oh, Ma, ain't you feared Daddy'll git hurted?"

"No, Child, I ain't much afeared." Searching her mother's face, Virgy saw there only a look of whimsical perplexity. Still wearing this baffled, amused expression, the latter returned to her dish-washing.

An hour later Mr. Gambel's return brought both women to the door with expectant eyes.

"Oh, hit was Jim Sprouse," he announced, and, without waiting for further inquisition, abruptly turned off to the barn.

"Jim! Jim?" cried Virgy in consternation, appealing to her mother. But the latter only smiled inscrutably. Virgy followed her indoors, mentally groping for some key to the behavior of these people.

"What makes Dad act so queer, Ma?" she asked impetuously.

"He's het up, thet's all. Don't mind it, Virgy."

"But he didn't give us no satisfaction," she persisted.

"And he won't—if you pester him."

"What-all's made Jim ac' this-a-way?" persevered Virgy, shifting her ground.

"I don't know a mite more about it than you do, Child."

"But you s'pect something?"

"Well, s'pose you do some s'pectin' for your own self," and with a tantalizing smile Mrs. Gambel betook herself to the spring, leaving Virgy to struggle alone with this highly complicated situation in her affairs.

All afternoon long the axe made melody on the mountain-side, while Virgy's thoughts made perturbed echo. And all afternoon long the subject was embarrassingly ignored in the home. But inadvertently that evening Mr. Gambel committed the indiscretion of speaking to himself aloud. "Drat the feller!" he exclaimed. "I b'lieve he has a head as long as his laigs!"

"What'd ye say, Jared?" called Polly, from within.

"Nawthin'. The dawg here ketched a yaller hornet, thinkin' hit was a fly! Thet's all." After which allegory Mr. Gambel chuckled and lapsed again into narcotic silence.

For an hour after retiring-time that night the murmur of voices reached Virgy through the log partition—a sure symptom that domestic counsel was in progress in the four-poster. She fell asleep hoping

that—as an outcome of this nocturnal confab—the next day would bring enlightenment.

But in this she met with fresh disappointment. Nothing was volunteered. She tried to draw her mother out, but the latter was obviously under some pact of silence; she shook her head to all queries. Plainly, the edict had gone forth that the subject was taboo. What a mysterious, exasperating tangle it all was! Jim's behavior was outrageous (but she secretly liked its audacity), and her father's as unaccountable; her mother's sphinx-like attitude she recognized as necessary in the politic game of the home, but resented it in her heart none the less.

In the days that followed, Mr. Gambel alternated between an irritable grouchiness and a certain grim humor, keeping an eye of disfavor on the multiplying gaps in the forested slope, but taking no steps to stop the vandalism. Morning by morning, the challenge of Jim's axe, flung out on the crisp, early air, rang into their ears as they sat at breakfast, bringing an element of restraint over the coffee and pone. The tension, growing with Virgy, reached its climax when one day she spied the walls of a log cabin rising trimly above its wild surroundings. That day she slipped the parental leash, and, like a wild creature, threaded the brush tangle till she stood in the clearing face to face with her astonished and delighted lover.

"No, Jim, you-all stand right thar with this log betwixt us till you give account of yourself!"

"But, Virgy, I'm plumb hongry to tetch you—jest fer a second!"

"No, you won't tetch me noways till I've foun' out a thing or two. Who air this house fer?—that's the fust."

"Hit's fer you."

"How come you buildin' hit on Dad's land, then?"

"It hain't yore dad's; hit's mine—or your'n."

"Gloryful-gracious, hev you an' everybody done gone crazy?"

Jim laughed gleefully.

"Sit down on the log, Virgy, an' I'll make everything plain."

Jim, it appeared, had long entertained suspicions that this wooded piece was a part of a "gore," and consequently Government land. Carrying chain for a survey party two years before, he had had this suspicion confirmed, and, anticipating their action, he filed claim upon it. He had since completed its purchase.

"I did n't narywise do hit to rob yore dad, Virgy; I done hit to save him, an' I hed to ac' quick. Then when he begun to git survigrous agin me, I 'lowed I'd give it to you instid."

The mollified Virgy saw nothing to object to in the morals of this procedure. As a consequence, he was allowed to "tetch" her for a moment.

"Did Dad know about this yere 'gore' all the while?"

"He s'picioned; but he always held that the 'tomahawk claim' he'd bought kivered it. But that war a mistake; the law don't take account o' sich claims where thar's no record of 'em."

Virgy's vision took in the cosy log cabin, so full of promise of domestic content.

"Yore dad is mortal sot agin me, ain't he?"

Virgy nodded.

"Say, Virgy, let's light out an' git married!"

She considered this brilliant proposal with expanded eyes.

"How'd we live after?"

Jim's india-rubber visage stretched at this echo of her father's worldly prudence.

"I might dig 'sang an' trap skunks," he offered, peering out at her from beneath his hat-brim. Virgy was covered with confusion, and by way of escape slapped him.

Order restored, he took up seriously the gage she had offered.

"I hev a horse an' waggin' of my own," he began in his deliberate way, "an'——"

"Why, Jim!"

"Shore I hev, an' some money to git outfittin', besides a way o' makin' more. Then——"

"Why did n't you-all tell Dad this?"

"Because, Virgy, things hes got to be brought home to yore Dad some other way than by tellin' him."

That had not dawned upon her. Slowly she realized how astute was Jim's insight into her father's character. It was a gift, she decided, and one that her mother and Jim had in common—a sort of spirit of divination they possessed. She wished she had it. It made one feel "mortal stupid" to be with folks of so much more discernment than oneself. So there was born in that hour a new respect for this hulking, slow-spoken lover of hers, and to his plans she offered no further objection. Rather, her enthusiasm outran his. When the two conspirators parted, all details had been arranged.

"The houn'-dawg liked to hev barked his head offen his neck las' night," casually remarked Mr. Gambel at breakfast next morning. "Some varmint a-prowlin' around—smelled your turkeys, Virgy, I reckon."

She went to the door and counted them.

"All hyer, anyways," she reported.

"Won't be some night—or else thet houn's a-lyin'," retorted her father.

"Mebbe thet's so, Dad," Virgy smiled as she turned away. Her mother gave her one sharp, swift glance, but said nothing.

It was not yet daybreak, and only the stars were on hand to espy proceedings, when Virgy slipped from her open window to Jim's arms and

thence to the soft earth. It was therefore an ill turn of fortune that at this critical instant Jim's uninvited cur should set up a fusillade of barks under the chestnut tree, bringing the "houn' dawg" from his retreat beneath the porch with a clamor of bayings.

"Oh, the turkeys, Jim!" and Virgy vanished around the corner of the house, followed by her dazed lover. The dogs were frantic with excitement. The turkeys, equally so, were flopping down from their roosts, peeping and clucking as they scuttled away in the dark. Outlined against the dimly luminous sky was an animal the size of a bushel basket, its gleaming eyes turned downward to the intruders.

"Catamount, by gosh!" ejaculated Jim.

"An' oh, Jim, he's got a turkey! Git it away from him! Kill 'im!"

"What with?" he muttered, looking about helplessly.

"Thar's the wood pile; chunk him!"

Obediently, Jim grabbed a billet and let drive at the crouching form. A screech the next instant attested the accuracy of his aim. The turkey, released from the animal's clutches, came fluttering down. The dogs yelped their admiration of the shot. Jim turned to get another missile, and as he did so the creature whirled quickly, ran along the limb, and with a leap disappeared within the open window of the loft. The jar of its entrance loosened the supporting stick—the shutter fell to with a bang. The cat was imprisoned within! Jim gazed open-mouthed, while the dogs were immeasurably gleeful. Virgy it was who realized the peril of the situation.

"Oh, Jim! Jim! The critter's gone in efter Ma an' Dad!"

There was a concerted rush for the side-door. The older couple, roused by this time, were discussing the disturbance outside. Mr. Gambel, scantily arrayed, was in the act of opening the door when Jim and the dogs arrived with a rush. There was a hoarse cry and a thunderous shock as Mr. Gambel landed sitting on the floor. Jim himself, hooked on the old man's legs, shot, mouth open, into the fireplace. The dogs scrambled along, taking it all as a joyous part of the game. It was Mr. Gambel's voice that first rose above the bruit of the dogs.

"Darnation! Who are you?"

"Oh, Dad!" shrieked Virgy, "thar's a catamount in the house, an' hit's efter you an' Ma! Git out quick!"

"Is thet you, Virgy?"

"'Course hit's me, Dad!"

"Well, who's thet sputterin' thar?"

"Jim. . . . Oh, Ma, hurry outen here!"

"Catch me hurryin' out! I'm going to stay right here in bed, like a proper female."

"Blast ye, Jim, what made ye land on me thet-a-way?" bawled Mr. Gambel, above the dog-racket. But Jim was still spitting ashes.

"Oh, Daddy," implored Virgy, "thar truly is a catamount upstairs. He lept in the winder." As if in verification of her words, a pair of phosphorescent orbs appeared at the top of the ladder-stairs. The dogs yelped fresh defiance and plunged for the ladder; whereupon the beast turned and leaped back into the loft. There was a sound of broken ware; and the trickle of a liquid.

"Gracious! Yore pickles, Ma!"

Mrs. Gambel sat up suddenly.

"Ain't you-uns goin' to do anything about it?" she challenged sharply.

"Yes, I am, M's' Gambel," responded Jim, with recovered voice. "I'm goin' to lambast his ole hide"; and that worthy groped his way toward the stairs, billet in hand.

"Hold up, Jim," cautioned Mr. Gambel. "Thet's powerful dangerous. Wait till I git my britches on and a spit lighted."

But Jim continued to advance undauntedly. The dogs were ahead, but wasn't the "cat" up the stair-ladder? Presently, Mr. Gambel, reviving the fire, lighted a pitch-pine torch and handed it to Jim.

"Whar's yer gun, Mr. Gambel?"

"Nary good, Jim. Lock's broke."

"Well, gimme thet iron poker thar." So armed, he made the ascent. The uproar began at once. The cat used up the dogs in a few seconds and sent them howling and bleeding down the ladder; but the prowler, having had a taste of Jim's militant arm earlier, was shy of his attacks. Those below could hear him talking and slamming at it all over the loft. The crash of broken articles was thrilling.

"Don't bat my spinnin'-wheel!" screamed Mrs. Gambel, in sudden fierce anxiety. As ill luck would have it, that very moment Jim landed a body-blow which evoked an agonizing screech, and occasioned the overturning of both wheel and "scutchin' horse," which came careering down the ladder, followed by the longer half of Jim's person. His bull-hide boots kicked convulsively an instant and then were withdrawn.

"Slipped on a pickle!" he explained—in a shout.

A fresh rush drove the creature down the ladder-way. The dogs made another valiant assault, and the cat leaped aside on the bed. Fearlessly, Mrs. Gambel grabbed a pillow and banged the intruder with it. Again the bewildered beast leaped, and this time landed on the meal barrel. The top collapsed, and the cat descended within. Before it could come out, Mr. Gambel, with sudden agility, seized the pillow, threw it on the furry back, sat himself on top, and yelled for somebody to "fetch a board!" The barrel shook as the caged and meal-blinded creature raged to get out, but Mr. Gambel's two hundred was equal to the situation. The catamount betook itself to a paroxysm of sneezing.

Jim arrived. "Whar's the animal?" he shouted.

"In hyer, in hyer!" bellowed the old man. "I'm holdin' him down! Dum ye, git a lid, quick!"

But nobody was quick enough, for the next instant with a yell Mr. Gambel shot from his seat, with a long slit in his trousers. If any further explanation had been necessary, the upthrust head and paw of the bob-cat would have furnished it. The cat blinked a fatal moment—just long enough for Jim's poker to descend. After that the stunned creature was dragged forth and despatched to the joyful pæans of the dogs.

These lively exercises completed, Mr. Gambel faced the two young folks with a stern countenance.

"Now, thar's jes' one thing I wanter know, an' thet is, how you two-uns come to be rompin' 'round in your good duds this yere time o' the mornin'?"

"I was runnin' off with Jim," said Virgy stoutly, taking the initiative. Mr. Gambel glared.

"Polly"—turning to his wife—"d'ye hear thet? They was runnin' off!" From beneath the up-drawn counterpane, Polly looked placid and silent.

"Whar was ye *runnin'* to?" he further catechised.

"To the preacher—to git merried."

"The tarnation ye was! What was yer objections to gittin' merried here?"

Jim and Virgy looked at each other in eloquent silence. A light of understanding began to play in Jim's eye.

"We thought you was puttin' up the objections," he offered finally.

Mr. Gambel laughed lustily and slapped Jim on the back.

"I reckon you hev the makin's all right, Jim. I ran away with Virgy's mother myself!"

"I knew ye did," said Jim, grinning.



CALIFORNIA SUNSHINE IN MIDSUMMER

BY OLIVE B. READ

THE sun shines dizzily, busily on.

The thirsty, parched ground burned brown,

Hillsides green all scorched to gray,

By the burning kisses of the sun of day

As the sun shines dizzily, busily on.

A PRINCESS IN CALICO

By Hapsburg Liebe

IT was n't until the regiment had landed in the Philippines that I found out just what Tom Patterson had in view by cultivatin' my friendship so diligent. He seemed to have me singled out from the very minute of his arrival in Fort McPherson, where we was made up. Tom was a mountaineer, and he had come from the Ho Knob section, which same is next-door neighbor to that wild place in East Tennessee knowed as Jeffrey's Hell; and as for a description of Tom—well, I guess he was a good deal like other mountaineers.

Our company had been dropped off a Campania Maritima steamer at a little town on the upper west coast of Luzon. Aringay was the name o' the town; it was sleepy and lazy in the daytime, and full of mosquitoes, stingin' ants, and villainous drinks after night. I was layin' out in the shade of an ylangyang, restin' up after a stint at helpin' to clean up the streets, and was almost ready to go to dreamin', when up walks Tom Patterson with his most beguilin' smile and sets down right at my side.

"Dink," says he to me in his slow drawl, "me and you is the only two fellers in this here comp'ny from old Tennessee, hain't we?"

I felt that the secret was about to be revealed at last. I sets up eager and bends an ear.

"Sure," says I. "What's comin', Thomas?"

"But, then, I'm from away back in the mountains, while you hain't," Tom goes on, his face beginnin' to turn a little red.

"Well, I reckon so," I agrees.

"I'm a' ign'rant mountain man, while you, Dink, are a person of eddication, and can read and write," pursues my bunkie.

I admits it all mighty solemn; and then Tom lays the great secret out before me.

"Dink," he says, his face now as red as a turkey-gobbler's nose, "I've got a sweetheart back at home, and I cain't read nor write a darned word!"

I sets up straight. So he had long been layin' his plans to make a sort of amanuensis o' me! I was to do his letter-readin' and letter-writin' for him! I lays back my ears like a Balaam, opens up my head, and begins to heehaw. Tom looks at me like he thinks I've got bats in my loft, turns pale, goes to his feet, and stalks off with his head as high as a young buck's.

"Hold on there, bunkie!" I yells. "Come back here, you great big boob! Of course I'll do your private secretary work for you, and be glad to help. I could n't help laughin', Tom, honest—you see, you said it so funny."

Tom turns. He seems a good deal mollified. He comes back to me and sets down at my side under the shade o' the ylangyang; then he fishes out of his blue flannel shirt a roll o' checkered Chino paper, some envelopes, and a pencil already sharpened to a needle point. Oh, he was prepared!

"Light in," he grins, and lays the paraphernalia in my lap. "Make it a reg'lar rock-bottom, all-wool-and-a-yard-wide love-letter, Dink."

"What's her name?" says I.

Tom did n't want to tell me, and would n't 'a' done it if I had n't convinced him that I had to know if I was to act as his private secretary.

Believe me, I reelly wrote Tom's Hallie a love-letter there under the shade o' the ylangyang. I had read half a dozen paper-back love-stories on the transport over, and I was still soggy with about a thousand of them novels' pet phrases. And as I'd write, I'd stop and read passages aloud to Tom, who was layin' flat of his back and starin' straight up at nothin'; and Tom he'd laugh and kick at the daylight moon like a man possessed of a devil. You see, Tom had that there love disease bad.

"I guess that'll hold her for me, all right," grins Tom, when I'd sealed the first letter to Hallie. "Dink," he adds, pattin' me on the back, "you're sure a jim-dandy."

That's just the prelude. The real yarn will now commence. Two years has passed by, with their snows and their sunshine, their smiles and their tears—as them paper-backs says—since I was appointed private secretary to Thomas Patterson of Ho Knob. Tom he's now a corporal, if that won't jar you, made that because of his distinguished service as a sharpshooter and a scout. And durin' them two years I had improved consid'able at my job—in fact, I had got to be a perfect amanuensis, as was attested by the character of the contents of Hallie's scrawlin' but faithful letters to Tom.

We was in Catbalogan, Island of Samar, restin' up from a hard campaign in the interior, and we was to go home in a short time.

Well, the little gunboat *Petrel* happens in one day about noon, and drops off a bag o' mail for the company. I did n't have nobody much to write to me, and therefore was n't expectin' anything I did n't get; but Tom had mail—Tom always had mail when anybody else did. The little gunboat brought three letters and a photograph for Tom this time. Me and him slides off to ourselves, with him huggin' the mail like it was a peck o' diamonds. We found a cocoanut palm, and decided that the shade of it would do for our shrine of worship. We sets down. Tom, all smiles, breaks the twine from around the photo, and takes off the wrappin'. The comin' o' the picture was n't no surprise to us: Tom he'd had his picture

took in Manila a few months before; he'd sent one to Hallie, and asked her to reciprocate by return mail, which same she had sure done.

I was a little anxious myself to see the picture; I wanted to know just what Hallie looked like. You understand, I'd wrote letters to her, and read letters from her, for so long that I felt like I deserved at least a brother's interest in her. I leans over close to Tom, and looks eager-like. Tom, his big, brown hands shakin' bad, moves the picture about a quarter of an inch towards me, so 's I can see better.

"That 's her—that 's Hallie, Dink," he says; and bless me if his voice was n't tremblin'!

I sure was n't anyways prepared for what I seen. I'd sort o' got Hallie figgered out as a slim little Indiany thing, all fire and tow and sharp-featured. This face was sure a fine one; its eyes, big and as clear as a bell, was all smilin' and seemed almost to want to talk and say that they loved Tom with all their might. The mouth was dainty, and it was smilin' too; and behind the lips there was two rows o' the evenest teeth I've ever seen. Now, it was n't because I'd seen so few women durin' the last two years that I was so tickled with Hallie's looks; it's been ten years since I set with Corporal Tom Patterson under the cocoanut palm and looked at the photo, and I still hangs to my first impressions. Hallie she was simply a world-beater, that 's what she was, and no mistake.

"Tom Patterson," I says, "you're the luckiest man this side o' purgatory. How long has it been goin' on?"

"Ever since three days afore I left home for the army," says Tom, powerful solemn. "I'd done enlisted, or I shore would n't 'a' come off and left her. Her folks had jest moved into our section."

"You sure like her, don't you, Tom?" I mutters, somehow feelin' a little lonesome.

"Like her!" blurts Tom, eyin' me with his big brown eyes. "Lord!" he says, sort o' in the tones of a prayer, "how much—how much I do like her!"

"Don't blame you," says I, real earnest. "If I was to meet one as fine-lookin' as her, she'd sure get the chance to change her name to Mrs. Dink immediate."

Tom seems mightily pleased, and takes up the three letters that had kept the picture company—at least, from Manila.

"Look at the postmarks, Dink," says he, "and read 'em in their proper turn."

The first letter did n't seem as good, somehow, as the others before it had been. I gets a strange feelin'—a sort o' premonition, you might say—which I tries hard to hide from Tom. I hands him the letter, and takes up the second epistle; the second epistle rambled a little, and then said that she'd got his picture, and was sendin' him one she'd had took at a show in town shortly previous. As I hands Tom this, he takes up

the third letter, and begins to turn it over and over in his big hands. I seen that it was sure thin and lean. I looked under Tom's battered hat-rim, and if there was n't the shadow of torment in his eyes, may I sink!

Finally Tom he thrusts the lean letter towards me, and drawls shaky-like: "Open 'er, Dink. But—but I cain't believe that thar's good news in thar."

I takes it, and tears off one end o' the cheap little envelope. There was only one sheet o' paper inside. The scrawlin' handwrite seemed even harder to read than it had been before. This is what I seen:

Tom paterson kind frend it aint no use for me to go on a foolen
you like ive been a dooin i feel meen about it but i caint love you and so i
think weed better quitt dont rite to me no more yore frend hallie.

I tell you, that scrawlin' letter jabbed into me like a bamboo spear, for Tom's sake. I had come to think a sight o' Tom Patterson. He was a man, Tom was, even if he could n't read nor write—a brave man, a fightin' man, that's what he was! And I knowed that them was the kind that feminine faithlessness hit the very hardest of all—it's human nature. I raises my eyes to Tom's; his was as dry and as hard as the steel o' the rifle he loved next to Hallie.

"Tell it, Dink," he whispers, plumb hoarse. "I might 'a' knowed it. I might 'a' knowed that I could n't never have no sech happiness."

Well, to save my life I could n't tell Tom Patterson the naked truth!

"She says, Tommy," I mutters, "that her maw is powerful sick, and that she jest don't know when she'll have the chance to write again."

Of course I knowed he'd find out the truth some time; but I thought even that would be better than to put it to him, brutal and cold-blooded, right then.

Patterson takes the letters and the picture, and shoves them inside his blue shirt without a word. Then he goes to his feet like a man with stiff joints, and for a minute stands and looks lonesome like out across the bay.

Before he walked off, he turned to me and said sort o' strange like, "Much obliged to you, Dink, shore."

After a few minutes spent in thinkin', I follows Tom to the row o' nipa huts in which our company has its quarters. But in some way he gave me the slip, and I did n't see him for several hours.

Time for evenin' retreat drawed high, and still Patterson had n't come in. I becomes uneasy, and goes to the top sergeant about it, openin' up my heart plain to him after his promise to keep his trap shut. The top, too, seems uneasy, because he had liked Tom Patterson almost as much as I had. Him and me we sets out for the Chino store section o' the town, and makes a clean search; but all our huntin' don't reveal hair nor hide o' the troubled mountaineer. Then we went to the captain, a big, whole-hearted man, and laid our tale of woe into his ears.

The captain smiles sort o' weak-like. "Boys," he says, "Patterson come to me and asked me to read the thin letter for him, and I done it without thinkin'."

So my lie to Tom had n't been of any use. I had n't fooled Tom a bit.

The captain goes on: "Lucban's men have got it in strong for Corporal Patterson, and we must n't let him wander out of town. I——"

What caused Captain Lyerly to break off abrupt like that was the sudden sound o' six rifle-shots comin' from towards the interior: *Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!*—just that way, as regular as the firin' of a Gatlin' and not much slower.

Almost before the company commander had ordered it, the trumpeter begun to sound the call to arms, shrill and quick. The company tumbled out o' the nipa huts, some of 'em barefooted and others bareheaded, and begun to form a skirmish line without bein' told. For a few minutes we works our way towards the point from which had come the sound o' the shootin', keepin' to the cover o' rice-paddies and cocoanut palms; then Captain Lyerly he sings out down the line to Lieutenant Prayther:

"Lieutenant," says he, "that was a Krag rifle that done the firin'. It must 'a' been Tom Patterson. We'd better break cover and double-quick out to his aid."

Which same we did.

Close up against the foot o' the hills that lays back o' Catbalogan, there is a fine grassy dell surrounded by palms and bamboos. Standin' in this dell, leanin' on the muzzle of his rifle, we found Corporal Tom Patterson. He did n't seem to notice us at all as we went up to him. And we seen that his eyes, steely hard, was riveted on somethin' that set at the root of a palm some thirty yards from him—he was starin' at the photograph of his Hallie, in which there was six round bullet-holes.

We stopped, and all become as still as the grave. The whole company seen the bullet-torn picture, and guessed right well at the cause of Tom Patterson's abstraction; and to their everlastin' credit I want to say here that not a man smiled or seemed anything but downright sorry for old Tom. Then the captain strides up to the grievin' man, and says in a low voice:

"Corporal Patterson—attention!"

Patterson straightens slow-like, with his gun's butt swingin' mechanical to a place beside his right foot.

"About face!" says Captain Lyerly.

Tom turns obedient but in his own time.

"Join your company," finishes the captain, easy in his talk.

Patterson come into our ranks, and we marched back to Catbalogan and had roll-call.

That night Tom he sneaks out to the dell at the foot o' the hills and gets the shot-up photo; and the very next mail carries it back to Hallie.

I addressed it myself—no, Tom did n't think hard o' me for tryin' to tell him a lie to save him from knowin' of the falseness of his sweetheart.

From that day on, much and manful as he tried, Corporal Tom was n't the same fellow; and none of us, even me and the officers, could n't offer a word o' sympathy. If ever I seen a man suffer under the burden of life, and yet smile and smile on the outside, that man was Tom Patterson, that splendid nobleman o' nature's own.

Neither Tom nor me reenlisted, but come straight home after the regiment was mustered out in 'Frisco. I lived tol'able close to Tom's mountains, and as I had n't no people much to be glad to see me, I decided to accept Tom's pressin' invite to go home with him and spend a week. For another thing, I had a feelin' that my friend would need me; I was afraid that he'd do somethin' he'd regret all the rest of his life when he seen his Hallie with some other fellow—because I'd reached the conclusion that there was another fellow, of course. Also, I'll admit that I wanted to set my eyes one time on the girl that'd turned our Tom down.

It was along in the middle of a bright autumn forenoon when we stepped from the train at a little way-station some twelve miles from Ho Knob, Tom's home mountain. We hit out, walkin' rapid, across the lowlands, makin' for the dim blue hills; and as we went we kept step like the soldiers we'd so lately been, and talked over old times like a pair of twenty-year campaigners. At the foot o' the first mountain, we struck a narrow, crooked path that run like the track of a great snake right up to the crest.

As we drewed nigh the top, I happened to see a calico sunbonnet, strangely animated, bob down out o' sight. Tom he'd seen it, too; but he did n't say nothin' at all about it, and I did n't neither. But I could tell right off that my comrade had been affected by it, for his laughin' got nervous and his line o' talk become plumb foolish.

When we'd reached the spot where we'd seen the sunbonnet disappear, which was the extreme crest, Tom he halts. His eyes, now hard and yet sort o' pitiful, begins to search the ground about us. I was n't slow to see what had caught his gaze: there was a bushel or so o' stripped ferns layin' here and there.

"Tom Patterson," says I, "there's sure been somebody doin' a sight o' waitin' and watchin' from this here spot!"

"I reckon maybe it's been my sister," growls Tom; and he looks at me like he just double dares me to disagree with him.

"But your sister surely would n't break out and run when she sees you comin'," says I, lookin' back at Tom. "Say," I continues, "how far is it from here to Ho Knob?"

"'Bout six miles," is the reply I gets.

"Then, whoever that is that's been waitin' and watchin' here has

been walkin' twelve miles a day for weeks. Sisters is usually lovin' folks, Tom," I says; "but they ain't like that."

My friend gives a snort of unbelief, and walks off toward Ho Knob, with his shoulders squared and his head high.

When we 'd covered another mile, which we done with mighty little talkin', I caught a glimpse of the calico bonnet again; it had dodged down behind a clump of laurels about a hundred feet off to our left. But it had n't dodged so quick but that I seen that the face inside of it was the very face o' the photo Tom Patterson had shot almost to pieces!

Tom had seen it too—he always seen anything anybody else seen. My, how he strutted, not deignin' to turn his head! But neither one of us did n't say a word to the other.

We had n't gone more 'n ten minutes further when we meets Hallie in the little, laurel-bordered path. She was barefooted, and her dress was blue and dotted with white; she was walkin' slow, with her head down, and her little, sunburned fingers was playin' nervous like with the end of her long, thick plait of black hair. It was plain to me that she was tryin' to make out that she did n't know Tom was anywhere within a thousand miles of her.

When she had come up close to Tom, she steps out o' the way, looks up, and smiles a smile that I just don't know how to describe. It seemed at first that Tom was goin' on without so much as noticin' her; but he suddenly stops and begins to stare straight into Hallie's big, clear brown eyes. Hallie's face goes sort o' pale, but her smile stays right there; she begins to return Tom's hard look with the gaze of a martyr—and then she gets my whole brother-heart on her side.

"Tom——" she begins, and then chokes up. She bends her head, and drops her plait o' thick, black hair.

Patterson took one quick step towards her. She puts up her arms, as if she's afraid. Tom takes her wrists in his big brown hands, one in each, and I could see that he was holdin' 'em so tight that her little, sunburned fingers stood straight out and apart from one another. And then Tom Patterson, as white as a ghost, and with the savage stickin' out all over him, begins to press the girl down towards the ground; and Hallie—Hallie continues to look up into his white face with her pale smile.

Well, blast the lights o' me, it got me all over. I steps up and takes Tom's shoulders in my hands, and pulls him back—Tom was sure a big man; but, then, I 'm no little fry myself.

"Don't!" cries Hallie—and it was plain that she was not talkin' to Tom, but to *me*.

But I did n't quit a bit. Hallie had me, sure. I jerks Tom back, and he lets loose o' the girl's wrists. Like a man in some terrible dream, he faces me.

"Look here, Tom Patterson," I says, meanin' every word of it, "you

can't play the cave-man and kill the little woman before my very eyes. I'll give you an arm, or a leg, or any number o' years from my life that you happen to want; but I'll be blessed if I'm goin' to see you hurt your Hallie. Now, there's been a mistake somewhere, Tom, and you'd better inquire into the matter a little."

Hallie, seemin' too happy to live in this mundane sphere, gives me a glance o' gratitude, and I begins to feel that my buttin' in had brought big returns already.

"What made you write me them last three no-'count letters, Hallie?" asks Tom in a pinched, dry voice.

Hallie did n't seem to be listenin' to him. She was busy takin' from the bosom of her calico dress a photograph full o' round bullet-holes. First she looked at the picture, and then she looked at Tom; and then she begins to cry without makin' a face, or sniffin' at the nose, or whinin', like people ought to cry.

"What made you do this, T-T-T-Tom?" she says.

Tom Patterson takes from his clothes a bundle o' letters—letters which, while he could n't read 'em, he had n't been able to destroy. He takes from the pack a thin, lean letter, and spreads it out before Hallie.

"And what made *you* do *this*?" he growls like a tiger.

"What does it say?" asks Hallie, her eyes wide.

Tom he hands over the "Kind friend" dope, readin' the letter from memory alone.

Hallie she straightens up like the little mountain princess she is. "Tom Patterson," she says, "I hope to die right here in my tracks if I done that!"

"Hush!" roars Patterson. "I can't read nor write"—and here he turns a little red at havin' to own up to it—"but I shore know yore handwritin' when I see it."

Hallie puts out her hand toward Tom, and in her clear brown eyes there is the light of a great understandin'.

"Tom," says she, powerful sweet-like, "I—I did n't want you to know it—but I cain't read nor write neither! And so I got Lizzy May Burkett to read and write my letters for me—and when she seen yore picture, so fine-lookin' in uniform, why—why, she—the *mean* thing—she laid plans to break you and me up and get you for her own self!"

"That's the answer, Tom!" I bellows until I frightened every squirrel within a mile. Take it from me, I was glad.

And Tom was n't two seconds in believin' it. Did he take the girl's hand in his, and go along up the mountain trail that way, with me taggin' along behind? He did not—he certainly did not. He takes Hallie up into his arms, just like she was a child, and marches off homeward with her—that's what he done. And me—well, I tags along behind, and wishes that I could find somebody like Tom's Hallie.

SELLING THE SECOND-HAND CAR

By C. L. Edholm

"THIRTY-ONE dollars and fifty cents," said the dealer.

"But," I gasped, "the accessories alone are worth more."

It was the first time I had tried to sell a second-hand car, and I was appalled at the cruelty of a \$31.50 offer on a machine "that should fetch two hundred and fifty dollars—easy!" That's what I had been told by the man who let me take it on an old debt. It was a 1905 Kazoo. The debt was a trifle older. I believe that the man (who shall be nameless) went into debt to buy that Kazoo.

So I explained to the dealer in used cars, with a calm and assured manner, what the person who let me have it had said: "It should fetch two hundred and fifty dollars—easy!"

"That's not my name," remarked the dealer, with ill-timed jocularly.

He went on to observe that his name was William Smith. Also, that he was not buying the car, but the accessories. "No call for Kazoos nowadays," he explained around the dead cigar that was partially interred in his face. "I'm offering thirty-one dollars and fifty cents for the speedometer, wind-shield, and lamps; you throw in the remains of the engine, crank-shaft, and toggle-joint as a bonus."

I told William Smith that I would consider his proposition, and drove out of the garage with hauteur and difficulty, owing to a misunderstanding with the reverse that wrecked the tail-light.

In spite of my assured bearing, I was depressed. The worst is now to be revealed. In my shed and amateur's workshop in the suburbs were three other used cars. I was the owner of not merely one second-hand car, but four. There were a 1908 Zip, a 1903 Thresher, the 1907 Kazoo, and the other Kazoo I was trying to drive through the traffic, a relic of 1905. Of course there was a certain antiquarian value attached to the collection. It showed the wonderful progress made in car design during a period of restless and daring experiment with the motoring public. As vehicles, they were of less value. As mountings for accessories, they were worth \$31.50 each. And I had taken them for six hundred dollars' worth of bad debts.

In order to keep this from being a sad story, I will omit my early

efforts to dispose of the Zip, the Thresher, and the two Kazoos for cash. Not wishing to shake anybody's faith in human nature, I will omit the offers of unlisted mining stocks and equities in submerged real estate which my "For Sale" ads. in the Sunday papers called forth. There are but few commodities less salable than a second-hand car, and I could have exchanged for all.

Several months went by, and then I had an idea. I had a vacation about the same time; several weeks on my brother's farm near Litchfield, where I met the best people at Sunday school picnics and strawberry festivals. These kindly people received me as a promising young financier high up in the Life Insurance Trust, although the adding machine I punch is really only twenty-four stories above the street. The fact that I owned four cars was referred to frequently by my brother, but in the most casual and perfectly refined manner. No ostentation.

Oswald, the youthful heir of Butternut Farm, showed immense interest in me from the first. Oswald had come into his property but recently, and his socks were almost silk and quite purple. Speed was his ideal; speed coupled with a loud splash. His rubber-tired buggy passed everything on the road, and now he was thinking of buying a regular red devil of an automobile. In the days of parental repression, he had held the tiller of a curved dash Oldsmobile just once, but the fumes of the deadly gasoline had entered his blood.

I told Oswald that I knew where he could pick up a used racer, already tuned up, for the price of a very ordinary new car, and as I described the roaring, flame-spitting monster, belching smoke from its exhaust, I saw clearly what I was to do. It was then that I got the idea. It is The Big Idea: the secret of selling second-hand cars.

Even for an amateur mechanic, it was not very difficult to transform my 1909 Zip into a racer. The process consisted mainly in taking away. The heavy swelling tonneau came off first, and the front seats were lowered and set at a rakish angle. A huge tank and a pile of all the spare tires from my other cars adorned the rear of the chassis, and a big racing number on the hood gave a clue as to what it was all supposed to represent. As four-inch pipe is cheap, I soon had an exhaust as large and noisy as anything on a Vanderbilt Cup winner, and by applying an excess of lubricating oil I could make it belch rich blue smoke like a dragon.

The car, or what was left of it, was then painted a bloody red, with the racing number in yellow, and as I surveyed my work, I knew that Oswald was my meat.

When I smoked down the village street after a brief absence, I invited that flattered youth to jump in and let her out until the speedometer, when it was visible through the smoke, showed a seventy-mile clip. That can be done if you don't mind ruining a second-hand speed-

ometer, and, what with the fog and flame and noise, thirty miles an hour seemed like seventy to Oswald.

When the young heir of the Butternut Farm learned that the speed devil was his for \$985.00 he wanted to kiss me, and he could hardly wait to get the money out of the bank. Before I said good-by, I cautioned him about the speed laws and made him promise never, never to make more than sixty miles an hour on a clear road, and as that would be just legal speed, with the revised speedometer, my conscience is clear.

Now that I had hit upon the right idea in selling cars with a past, the rest was easy. Give the dear people what they want. Precisely that.

For instance, the 1903 Thresher was readily adapted to the prejudices of Deacon Asbury, also of Litchfield, whose carry-all had finally collapsed after the manner of the "one-hoss shay," which broke the heart of the faithful Dobbin.

I sympathized with the deacon, and told him of a gentle family motor-car that I knew; sound in wind and limb and warranted not to kick or bite. When he showed genuine interest, I went home and remodeled that ancient Thresher until it looked like a half-brother of the departed carry-all. It was better suited to that purpose than the two Kazoos, as it had carriage-wheels and solid rubber, narrow tires to begin with. I added a mohair top with a jaunty fringe hanging down all around, and replaced the acetylene headlights with kerosene burners. The springs were tinkered with until they let the body roll like an old-fashioned stage-coach, and I even screwed a holder for the buggy-whip on the dash.

Where I really won the Deacon was at the start by saying, "Giddap!" as I threw in the clutch. It seemed like the dear old carry-all to Deacon Asbury from that moment, and as I drove at a six-mile gait, an easy jog trot, down the maple-shaded street, he never thought of being frightened. In fact, when he got out, the deacon walked around the machine, running his hands down its spokes, and I believe that if I had carried out my original intention of putting blinders on the headlights, he would have tried to feed it a lump of sugar.

I gently explained the mechanism in horse-and-buggy terms as far as possible, and when they gave out I used such familiar machinery as the lawn-mower and coffee-mill for comparison. In that way it is easy to teach and pleasant to learn. I am sure that he would have become suspicious if I had displayed all my knowledge of differentials, planetary transmissions, and magnetos after the manner of the indiscriminating demonstrator. Surely he would not have written a check for four hundred and fifty dollars, nor would I have left him gently rubbing the radiator and purring, "So-o, Dobbin. Good old hoss." He would have always been afraid that a differential might bite him or strike out with its fore hoofs, doing him an injury.

By this time I was reduced to the two Kazoos, each of which had its good points, though both had pretty rotten ones. Fortunately, the parts were interchangeable, being of the same make, so I removed the defective crankshaft with the cracked casing to the 1905 Kazoo, which had a wornout engine. In short, the older model was not much better than junk when I had replaced all the defective parts of the 1907 model, but, on the other hand, the latter was a good, serviceable car. I became so genuinely attached to it, that I was quite regretful when a man who understood cars offered me \$250.00 and I could not resist. This sale gave me less pleasure than the others. It was business, but it was not Art.

My remaining possession, the last of the Kazoos, was barely able to limp around the block without something rattling loose, but it was certainly strong on accessories. All that was left over from the other three cars, such as the acetylene lamps from the Thresher, was tacked upon the 1905 Kazoo till it fairly bristled. I remember that it had two auto-clocks, for instance; one slow and the other permanently stopped. But I polished them nicely; polished all the brass of all the accessories until it shone like gold. Then I ran the car cautiously until within half a block of the garage of William Smith, when I cleverly brought up the speed to ten miles an hour and drove through the wide doorway. Something rattled ominously as I slowed down, but William Smith failed to hear it. He was looking at the lamps.

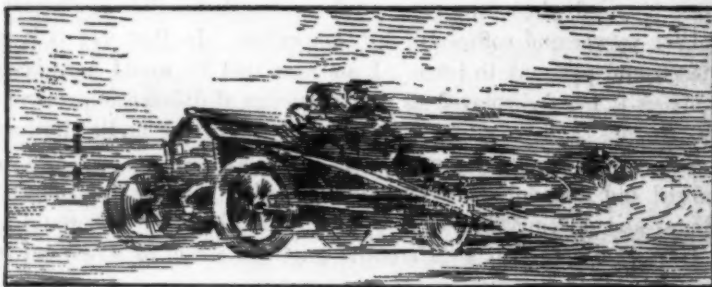
"What's the best offer you can make on this nifty little Kazoo?" I asked, jumping lightly to the floor.

"I thought you'd be back," he remarked, bringing out the words from around that same dead cigar. "There's no call for old Kazoos, but I'll give you thirty-one dollars and fifty cents for the accessories."

"There are two new headlights," I observed. "Make it an even thirty-five."

"Done!" exclaimed William Smith, and reached for his check-book.

There was really forty dollars' worth of lamps and fixings on the wreck, but I thought that under the circumstances I could stand a five-dollar loss.



CAPTAIN MATT

By William R. Lighton

AS a rule, Captain Matt's channels of thought and speech were mere dry gulches, sandy, arid, and unprofitable, or at best carrying only a sluggish dribble of turbid commonplace. But sometimes, when there had been a generous outpouring of good liquor, these channels would run a bank-full freshet, seething and foaming; then there would be washed out of the captain's intellectual sand-banks an odd miscellany—a vast quantity of bright-hued pebbles of thought, with a rarely occasional rough gem. He had an inexhaustible fund of unreliable information upon every impractical subject. It was only at these times of spirituous inundation that he repaid the labor of an attempt to cultivate him. When he was entirely sober, the officers of the mess shunned him as an insufferable ass; when he had been properly stimulated, he was welcome in any group in the club-rooms.

There was a select company in a corner of the billiard-room. Captain Matt had absorbed a rapid sequence of five small glasses of cognac. With the third glass, he had begun the telling of a story—a story which then threatened to drag its way wearily for many minutes over the dead level of tedium. But with the fourth glass he had warmed to his work, and put into the story a few master-strokes—a gorgeous bit of love-making, and a dramatic heart-break. Now, while his voice carried a liquid intonation, due to the last drops of the fifth glass, he was bringing the tale to a perfect finish:

"So she married the man who had written the poem. And as he was a philosopher, it follows, of course, that they lived very unhappily ever after."

It had been a very good story, illustrating a knotty problem in life. Its finest points had addressed themselves particularly to the older men—which is always the distinguishing mark of a good story, well told. The cavalry major and the post surgeon, grizzled and habitually firm-lipped, had grown very serious and rigid in every facial line as the tale drew to a close. But the post adjutant was a very young man, with red lips still suggestive of mother-kisses. He had not yet grown to an understanding of life's finenesses; so he was disappointed at the story's abrupt ending, which left so much to the listener's ripened intelligence.

"Of course they lived very unhappily ever after?" he repeated in vague inquiry.

"That's what he said," returned the cavalry major shortly. The major wanted a few minutes of unbroken silence for the story's proper assimilation.

"Well, but," the adjutant went on stubbornly, while he reached for the electric push-button which was to summon the genius of the club-steward's room, "I don't quite see the force of that."

The adjutant's fingering of the push-button meant another round of drinks: this made Captain Matt tolerant of the youngster's dullness.

"That's right, Billy," he said, while with his finger-tip he traced geometrical designs in the scattered drops of liquor upon the polished table-top. "The only perfect happiness in marriage comes when an unphilosophical fool of a man marries an unphilosophical fool of a girl, and neither ever wakes to wisdom. That's self-evident, to a philosopher. It's in the very nature of the case."

The steward's boy stood awaiting orders.

"Gimme a cigar," the post surgeon said, as he drew his cape over his shoulders.

"Here, too," the major of cavalry ordered. "I'm going home."

"Cognac," Captain Matt said briefly.

"I want a claret float," the adjutant added to the order; whereat the major smiled in grim pity.

"It's perfectly futile trying to rub that moral into a boy who drinks claret float," he suggested; but the remark did not balk the adjutant's insistence.

"How could philosophy spoil a happy marriage?" he asked of the company at large.

"The only way for you to satisfy yourself on that point is to go and marry a female philosopher," the post surgeon said rudely—an unseemly rudeness, considering that he was lighting a fat black cigar for which the adjutant was signing a check.

"Is n't that proposition a little faulty?" queried the major. "Do you suppose Billy *could* marry a woman who was enough of a philosopher to make the experiment convincing?"

Then the two older men went away, and soon afterward Captain Matt became maudlin.

A woman does not like a dull man, even when his dullness is the inevitable result of so large a virtue as sobriety; she is hardly more tolerant of the intellectual fire kindled by alcohol. Between these two states of fact Captain Matt hung suspended, a bachelor of thirty-five. This was due for the most part to his own good judgment; and yet it was largely too bad, for he had a gentle heart, which loved all womankind.

Sometimes, when his condition had been very pitiable, the bluff old

major of cavalry would take it upon himself to protest. The major liked his young captain: he told himself that his regard was that of a father for a son. He flattered himself that he read the young man "like a book"; which only shows how little wisdom we get as we grow old. No one knew Captain Matt; least of all did he know himself.

On the morning after the meeting in the billiard-room, the young man was trying to wash away, with brandy and soda, the unholy marks of a lamentable night, the while the major was talking, in his fat voice—and talking against odds, for the captain's headache made his attention waver.

"Look here, Matt; this ain't right. You ought n't to do it. You can't live up to your capacities. Every man owes it to himself to do that, you know."

"Strikes me I rather overestimated my capacity last night," Captain Matt returned wearily, as though the effort of speech nauseated him.

The major grinned appreciatively; the sentiment was so wholly borne out by appearances.

"You don't half appreciate your condition," he urged. "You're wasting a lot of dynamic energy. Brace up. You'd be eternally grateful to yourself for it."

"I hate debts of gratitude," the other said; "they're so impossible of payment. So I avoid incurring them, even to myself."

"It don't do any good to turn words wrong side out," the major returned. "You ought to look at it sensibly. Just see what you'll be after a while, if you keep up these—debauches." The last word came after a doubtful pause, as though he feared to offend.

"Go it!" Captain Matt said. "You can't use as hard words as I've used, in my little private conversations with myself. I've fairly insulted myself, calling hard names. But they don't do any good. Keep on, though, if you like."

"Well, then," the major summed up, "I wish you'd sober up."

"Damnation!" Captain Matt exploded. "What a speech to come from you! You know you don't wish any such fool thing. You know if I'd sober up finally, you'd be the first to quit me. You know you like to have me drink, for the same reason that I like it myself. When I'm sober, I'm as narrow as a baby's teething-ring; when I'm drinking, I'm as broad as the undetermined orbit of a new comet. That's why I drink."

Faulty logic, doubtless, but the facts were irrefutable. The major had been wrinkling his fat forehead perplexedly through this speech. He knew it to be wholly true. He would not have enjoyed, he could hardly have tolerated, an hour's converse with Matt sober. The mere possibility of such a calamity made him temporize weakly.

"Maybe I ought n't to talk so plainly, Matt; but I do it from a sense of duty. You appreciate that."

"Oh, sure! Only, this 'sense of duty' business has sent more men to blazes than it's ever helped out. There ought to be a law against 'sense of duty'; or else the man who's afflicted with it ought to bear the consequences himself, instead of unloading them on other folks. 'Sense of duty' makes me as uneasy as toasted-cracker crumbs in my bed when I'm sick—and don't do any more good."

"Well," the major protested, "brandy is n't the only aid to self-forgetfulness. I've thought about it for you. I'll bet I've given it more thought than you have yourself. You ought to marry."

Captain Matt's lips drew into a distasteful grimace under the protection of his mustache.

"I'll not forget myself so far as that," he said curtly. "If that's the sum total of your thinking, you'd better quit thinking. Evidently you're not cut out for it."

The major took the rebuff very kindly. He had disturbed Captain Matt's usually placid and unruffled surface—a feat not often accomplished; therefore he was well content to bear the slight and harmless marks of the young man's displeasure. He kept discreetly silent for a time, knowing that his silence was likely to be the most successful provocative of speech on the part of his companion. It was a situation in which some one had to say something: so the major lay in ambush, and waited for the other to expose his position.

"I'd cut a nice figure, would n't I, as the responsible head of a family?" Captain Matt blurted. "Hop-o'-My-Thumb trying to play Atlas!"

"I'm not joking, Matt," the major contented himself with saying.

"Are n't you?" returned the captain. "It would be more of a credit to your intellect if you were."

"All I say is, you'll be humiliated some time by having to confess yourself mistaken," the major commented placidly.

"If I make a mistake in staying as I am," said Captain Matt, "I'll at least have the satisfaction of knowing I'd have made a bigger mistake the other way. Why, Major, just suppose for argument what's inconceivable in fact—suppose I should marry: what would it amount to? Take your own warning: what'd I be ten or fifteen years from now, if I should keep on drinking enough to make me entertaining company for my wife? I'd be like old Starr, or Blackmore, or Dowd, or any of those old bucks—just drawing my pay and waiting for death. And that would be pretty rough on the girl, would n't it?"

"You don't catch the idea," the major urged. "I mean a wife would do away with your need of drink."

For once, Captain Matt was stunned into silence—a silence of blinking eyes and hanging jaw—a silence which he held for a long time, letting the idea filter slowly through it.

"You mean," he said weakly, "you mean she'd take the place of cognac as a stimulant?"

"Exactly!" the major said. The notion had come into his own brain upon the heel of the moment, but he was delighted and vastly pleased with himself over the dazzling surprise it had given his companion. The notion offered so much to the explorer that it held the captain entranced for a while longer, his glass poised before him and his eyes full of lively thought.

"No good, major," he said at last decisively. "I've just completed a canvass of the girls I know. There's no such girl in the list. Some of 'em might do, in a measure, but the very best of 'em would have to be supplemented with brandy. Try again."

"You get the right one, the one adapted to you, as I've got, and you'll find I'm right," the major persisted.

Captain Matt's grin was wicked.

"What's that you're drinking, old man?" he asked.

The major flushed hotly as he glanced at the glass of rye whiskey on the table before him. But his recovery was prompt.

"I've got to drink a little once in a while, Matt, to subdue an excess of vital enthusiasm."

"And to take the edge off your sensibilities," Captain Matt added. Then they turned to a game of seven-up.

It was not many days after this that the major met his captain upon the parade-ground one evening at the breaking up of dress-parade. The captain's face was heavy and drooping. The major interpreted it as merely the inertia of sobriety until the younger man spoke.

"Major, I want to talk to you."

The major laid his hand in the crook of Captain Matt's elbow.

"Not here," he said; "come along. I'm too short-winded to walk and talk at once." He led the way to the seclusion of the reading-room at the officers' mess, and called for Captain Matt's habitual tipple.

"In theory, Matt," he said unblushingly, "you ought to keep perfectly sober; but in practice—you just take two good drinks before you say a word."

Captain Matt took the proffered glass and held it before him, looking at it with doubtful eyes. It was an unusual action: he was not given to dallying or to tickling the sense of sight with a glass of good liquor. By and by he drank the little portion at a mouthful, and paid no heed to the dewy decoration of his mustache until he had followed the first drink with the second. Then he drew the long damp strands of his mustache into nice order, and began beating upon the table with his finger-tips a little prelude to his speech.

"I was already quite full of brandy," he said; "not literally, but as

a mere figure of speech. I mean I've been thinking about it a good deal." Then a short silence.

"Well, what of it?" asked the major.

"I think, Major, I may have found the substitute we were talking about."

The old major had a shock of joyful surprise, such as always comes to the prophet when he finds his prophecy fulfilled. But as yet there was nothing for him to say; so he waited.

"Frankly," Captain Matt was compelled to say, "it's Madeline Owen." And the major grinned. Most of the unmarried men of the post, and many of those not so circumstanced, were in love with the commanding officer's niece, a rose-tinted visitor from Virginia.

Captain Matt was quite calm and unruffled as he proceeded—as calm as he might have been over the solution of a problem in engineering.

"Of course," he said, "I knew her pretty well when we had our talk the other night, but somehow she escaped my memory just then. But after that, involuntarily, when I found myself in the company of a nice girl, I thought about that proposition of yours. When I next met her, it was at the Friday hop. I'd taken two or three drinks, as I always do, to brace me for the ordeal of talking to the women. But when it came time to talk to her, after the waltz she'd given me, why, hang it! I could n't talk. I just drivelled. I tried to say something, but when she looked at me, the best I could say sounded like the rattle of shot in a dried bladder. And I could see that she was very tired before it came time to hand her over to her next partner. I'd never noticed that before when I was with her. And all the time she was so cool, and so perfectly poised, and her eyes——"

"Say, Matt," interjected the major, "if it's all the same to you, just skip that, will you?"

"I'd be almighty glad to skip the whole miserable business, if I could," Captain Matt returned ruefully, "but my intellectual legs are n't equal to it. I ain't so good a skipper. I've got to face it, until I find some way of getting over it, besides skipping."

His face was drawn into the downward tending lines of depression, and his eyes were heavy with thought. The major was jubilant, for it was not often that any one was privileged to have Captain Matt hipped.

"Well, trot along, sonny," he said grimly.

"Why, confound your athletic spirit!" Captain Matt blurted. "Trotting's no easier than skipping. The fact is, I'm just about at a standstill. I've never found myself in a situation where cognac was n't perfectly efficient. Now I've come to it, and I'm dazed."

"Well?" the major said with heartless brevity, when the other seemed inclined to withdraw into himself.

"Well!" Captain Matt exploded. "Next day I took her out wheeling. Did n't touch a drop all day, and was just about as entertaining as a

mud-turtle. Oh, I cut a fine figure! And she—why, confound it, Major: when I looked at her I felt as though I had an absolutely new thirst and did n't know what to take for it! And I'd flattered myself that I knew all about every sort of thirst there was. I tell you, it was humiliating to a club member in good standing."

"Well?" the major was forced to interrogate again.

"That's just the situation as it is," Captain Matt jerked. "It's a problem which must be solved. Now, Major, will you help me work it out?"

The major got to his feet, slowly stroking his yellow helmet crest into shape.

"No, Matt," he said; "I won't do it."

"I knew you would n't," Captain Matt said, picking up his gauntlets and preparing to follow the major downstairs. "That's why I asked you. I don't like a man who's always poking his advice into things which don't concern him."

But at his dinner the gray and stout old major was very thoughtful, dabbling his spoon idly in his soup and paying small heed to the dinner's sequence; all of which was very unlike him.

"Poor Matt!" he was thinking. "I wish the boy might have her. But how's it going to be done?"

Twice or thrice he glanced doubtfully across the table at his wife, a bland-faced, fat old lady. But if he was ever tempted to a division of his confidence, he changed his mind in good time. Only once, when the serious work of the meal was done, and there was leisure for it, he ventured a very broad expression of wonder whether a man, if compelled by stern necessity to choose, might be most perfectly happy with brandy and no wife, or with wife and no brandy: to which the placid old lady, accustomed to her lord's vagaries, paid only light passing heed:

"Why, Major! Of course he'd be most perfectly happy with whichever he had n't got."

Meantime Captain Matt, in his perturbation, had abandoned all thought of dining, and was passing the hour, instead, in tramping up and down the veranda in front of his quarters, smoking, and cursing the futility of good intentions. And so he swore, the words coming smothered and half-broken between teeth gripped tight upon his amber pipe-stem.

Then more measured pacing up and down, with wrinkling of forehead and burning of black tobacco. And in a moment the amber pipe-stem snapped sharply in two, sending the bowl rattling upon the veranda floor, while the captain stood over it, holding the mouth-piece idly between his lips. He stooped slowly, picked up the bowl, and, with that infallible human instinct, fitted the broken edges together.

"Never before in my life have I bitten a pipe-stem in two," he said. "I wonder if a man in love might do a thing like that."

And thereafter the steady tap of his boot-heels grew less emphatic and resolute, as he took up his interrupted walk.

"There's no way for it," he said at last, "but to go and see her. I can't pick out the tangle; maybe she'll help me."

And so it came about—never mind the preliminaries—that on the next afternoon Captain Matt's yellow-lined cape was spread upon the ground in a beautiful spot in the October woods, with the commanding officer's niece sitting upon the cape, Captain Matt near her, his campaign hat drawn low over his face and his fingers locked tightly about his bent knees. His hands were almost bloodless, but the veins at his temples were turgid.

"I want to ask you something," he said, after a lapse of contemplative silence. "Do you like a perfectly truthful man?"

On the ride from the post, he had been in a very light-headed and irresponsible humor; now he was grown suddenly serious, and the girl was puzzled, though without showing it.

"How can I say?" she asked in return.

"You mean you've never known one?" he asked.

"Have you?" she parried.

"Well," he said, with heavy effort, "you shall have the novel experience, then, of talking for a few minutes with a man who for that length of time will guarantee to be perfectly and unreservedly truthful. I'll convince you of that by owning that before we left the post I drank a half-pint of brandy to put me in condition for what I have to say."

This was growing very serious, and the girl's eyes were shadowy with apprehension. Not that she was a love's novice; but there is always, even with the hardest veteran campaigner, which she was not, a certain breathlessness in such situations, not at all comfortable. So she tried to have her face express discouragement for the captain. But he did not look at her face; he was looking at the litter of brown leaves at his feet.

"Don't get frightened," he said. "I'm only dealing with generalities. You're a sensible woman, and I thought you might help me. In the last fifteen years," he went on deliberately, "I've swallowed on an average a pint of brandy every day. Let's see; that's forty-five gallons a year; say even seven hundred gallons in the fifteen years. I've come to depend on it. You see, I took to doing this to get away from my sober mental self, which I despise. The fact is, I'm like two men occupying the same quarters, and finding one another very uncongenial and hateful. Do you see? You have cause to know what I am in a natural state—I mean, in a sober state. I was perfectly sober the day we went wheeling. And at such times I'm no more entertaining to myself than I was to you. That's why I drink brandy. It sets my thoughts in motion, and makes me congenial company for myself, at any rate, and for the boys too, I reckon. Bad state of things, isn't it?"

The girl had lost her embarrassed apprehension; it had been covered up and smothered by vague wonder at the captain's strange speech, while she regarded him intently, with wide, surprised eyes. One might have doubted, looking at her, whether she wholly relished the new experience of meeting a truthful man.

"I know what you'd probably like to say," Captain Matt pursued; "at least, I know what ninety-nine women in a hundred would say; but maybe you're the hundredth. They'd say that the virtue of sobriety ought to be its own sufficient reward. But it is n't. The trouble is that when I'm sober—perfectly sober—I have n't sense enough to realize that it is a virtuous condition."

He paused, looking at her doubtfully, while his fingers toyed with the dry leaves. There was a quaking fear in his heart that she would not understand, or, understanding, could not appreciate. And all he saw in her face did not reassure him, for she seemed only troubled; not sympathetic, nor anything like it.

"Well?" he asked, when she did not speak. "What do you think of that? Don't be afraid to speak your mind; that's what I want."

"You ask a very strange thing," she said slowly.

"Oh, of course!" he assented eagerly. "That's natural. When a man says just what he means, he always says strange things. Now I want you to say just what you think, please."

"Tell me the rest," she said simply, "for of course there is more, is n't there?"

"Yes," he agreed; "there's a whole lot more. But the fact is, it's in a very chaotic state in my own mind. You see, I have n't wasted much time in thinking about it, until a little while ago. What was the use of thinking, really? There was no promise of anything to be gained by it. I've told you before that when I did n't drink, I could n't think, and when I'd take a drink or two to stimulate my mental processes, somehow the stimulated brain was never able to find consistent fault with itself. But somehow—I can't account for it wholly—somehow, within these last few days, I've got a shock of appreciation of the qualities I really lack. And I seem, when I look at it, to lack about every essential quality of manhood. And now that I've come to that state, brandy does n't help me; it only wakes me up to a fuller understanding of what I am, and what I ought to be. Well, that's about all, unless I undertake a moral homily on the facts. And confound all moral homilies! Now what do you think?"

She spoke readily enough, and very quietly, as though the matter were not new to her.

"It is a sad thing," she said. "It is always a sad thing to have a man fail of living up to his destiny. No man has any right to fail in that."

"What do you say a 'man's destiny' is?" he queried dubiously, for

her counsel promised, from its constrained beginning, to yield little more than the moral homily which he had derided.

"Why," she answered sharply, "a man's mission is to be a man. What else would you think? I'm afraid you'll think you've made a mistake, Captain, in coming to me for the usual run of womanly sympathy. But you *have* chosen to come to me," she went on, with a certain tense eagerness, "and I'm going to make use of the chance to say that I have no sort of soft sympathy to give to a man whose only claim to it is based upon his own deliberate, or at best unreasoning, squandering of his manhood."

Here was helpful counsel with a vengeance. Captain Matt took it in wide-eyed astonishment.

"Go it!" he cried involuntarily. "Say, I like that! It's different. It makes me feel as I've felt when I've run across an unexpected bottle of good stuff in a little frontier post sometimes. I mean, I did n't think you'd have the nerve to say such a thing. Women are n't nervy, as a rule, you know. Only, this is n't altogether satisfactory, my lady. Look here; a clod lying in a furrow has abundant virtue—all that ever was. So has a dog, stretched out in the sun."

"They fill their places," she returned. "You can speak of them lightly, but they certainly fill their places, and fill them better than many men fill theirs—if men's places are the places of lords of creation, as they say of themselves. And a man is neither a clod nor a dog; you have to think of that, too. He's a rational creature; or he says he is. That ought to make it all the harder for him to justify his failure to live up to himself."

Captain Matt's lips were puckered, and his brows drawn close over his eyes. He was enjoying, in his turn, a novel experience.

"That's a very strange thing for a woman to say," he said slowly. "I always thought that a woman was fulfilling her mission when she was hard at work justifying a man's faults and shortcomings." It was a deliberate thrust, deliberately calculated to spur this companion to further frank speech.

"That's shameful!" she answered, with a dangerous light in her eyes. "Your notions of women must have been gotten from the study of very poor models. I know women go to very great lengths of forgiveness. But that's only to give a man another chance. It is n't justification. No woman ever justifies a man's shortcomings."

"Then, the corollary is that there's no justification for mine?" he said.

"Certainly not," she answered. "You know that. If you don't, you're hopeless. I know you did n't expect this," she went on, just a little bitterly, "but we ought to be honest with each other—I mean, men and women generally. So long as neither pretends to speak honestly to the other, are n't they bound to remain strangers—in effect? And that's

a pity. I think the trouble with you is—you've put the discussion on a personal ground, so I'm licensed to say this—you've not been honest with yourself. You've deluded yourself in a very irrational and unmanly way. I should be very sorry to find any excuse for it. The only excuse possible would be a very uncomplimentary one. You're going to pardon such plain speech, I know. I speak so plainly because it's a subject on which I've felt very deeply."

Captain Matt's astonishment was so genuine and so filled him that he had had no thought of taking offense at the hard, sharp words. His surprise was not so great at the words as at the woman. He could hardly think that this was the same creature who, in airy ball costume, had danced with him a week ago, and who had talked little nothings with him afterward, through five slow minutes. The face was the same. Hardly, either: it was now a transformed face, with strong lines about the self-possessed lips and the round chin, and a very clear light in the blue eyes. He confessed that he liked it better now. His heart was knocking strongly against his ribs, while he came to a slow realization of what a sorry spectacle he was making of himself. He confessed to himself that he had expected to find her much like other women. And he also confessed himself glad, in the midst of his shock of surprise, that he had been so mistaken.

"You—you've put it all very straight and plain," he said weakly, not knowing quite what to say. "I've been an egregious ass. I suppose when I own that, it's a step in the right direction?"

"Yes," she assented, with uncomplimentary readiness. "You said a while ago that you'd waked up to a sense of what you ought to be. Now there's nothing for it but to go on. I think a man can be just about what he wants to be. And I'm not sure—I'm going to use your comparison—I'm not sure but that it's better to be a success as a clod than to be a failure as a man."

Then a strange thing happened. A mist came over the blue eyes, and a weak trembling took possession of the firm lips. Then she bent her face into her hands and cried.

Now, it is very hard upon a man to have a woman cry when she talks to him; particularly as she may cry with equal propriety from any one of so great a variety of causes. He never knows whether to interpret her tears as a good or bad token. To know this, he would have to combine the qualities of man, prophet, demon, and angel, and be divinely inspired into the bargain. Probably even then his best effort would be but a rough guess. Being only mortal, and feeling the dead weight of his mortality as he had never felt it before in all his life, Captain Matt did not pretend to understand. He could do nothing but stand by in silence and let the girl cry. Once he lifted his nerveless fingers and lightly touched the loose waves of her hair, then set his teeth grimly and waited, paying no heed

to anything but the knocking of his heart, as it beat out the slow seconds, which threatened to lengthen well out into eternity before Madeline made a poor show of composing herself, and quavered:

"Now please take me home."

It was a day out of many, set apart and glorified. Yet on the ride homeward, Captain Matt saw nothing of this. He saw only what such a man may see when he looks fearlessly inward.

When he was in his own quarters, he walked straight to the sideboard in his dining-room. A decanter stood ready to his hand, with a glass beside it. Slowly he filled the glass, brimming full of the dusky liquor, then stood irresolute, looking at it. What he had drunk in the early afternoon had died out of his blood. He felt very inert and helpless, and his throat and lips were parched. He had no power to think, and he knew that the brandy would give him that power.

He took the glass in his hand and walked with it to the open fire, crackling in the grate. The firelight shone through the liquor, as he held it before him, the flames dancing lightly in it, making it glow and sparkle as though it had life of its own. Its rich odor was strong in his nostrils, tempting him.

With shaking hand, he tipped the glass over, letting the brandy fall, drop by drop, upon the fire, which leaped to meet it, sending it back into the air in curling flames of vivid blue.

And then the days were turned to slow dull torture, and the nights to slow dull pain. His brain was no more to be quickened into life; its only office seemed to be to show him what a sorry piece of abject misery a man may grow to be. His eyes were dull, seeing nothing beautiful; his ears were dull, hearing nothing beautiful. His hand was the weak, nerveless hand of an old man. Words were almost strangers to his lips, which were drawn into a thin, straight, colorless line.

He was so dull, so very dull, that he was well let alone; that was a great comfort to him. His brother officers talked, of course; they were bound to talk. Only the major of cavalry refrained from joining in the chorus of biting comment. The major held his peace, waiting.

Captain Matt's feet remained his friends. They walked with him—walked, walked, walked; miles, miles. He came to measure the passing of the sluggish days, not by hours, but by miles. Sometimes he thought dully of death, and dully envied those who had honorably gone through it. Yet, in spite of all this, he let his cognac alone, as though he had wholly done with it.

In all this time he did not see Madeline; he made no effort to see her; he seemed rather to avoid any possibility of meeting her.

After a fortnight of this, one slow night he walked, as was his constant habit, before his quarters. From the elm at the corner to the end of the gravel walk near the guard-house, seventy paces; back to the elm at

the corner, seventy paces. Time for the round trip, three minutes; twenty trips to the hour. How well he knew it!

The night was balmy, moonless, and cloudless. The leaves which yet clung to the trees were few and dry, and rustled a protest when the wind disturbed them. It was a night full of soothing and healing. No man has measured life at its broadest part who has not lived through such a night out of doors, with all his senses broad awake.

The sentry at the guard-house started the familiar call: "Post Number One! Two o'clock, and all 's well!"

Captain Matt listened to the call as it passed from one to another of the sentries on post, growing faint and fainter, then swelling nearer, until its round was complete, and Number One made his report, in softened tones, "All 's well!"

A light sense of peace came upon the tired listener—an indefinable lifting of the weight which had borne him down. It was as though the words were not a mere perfunctory expression of guard duty, but a specific message to himself. He lifted his cap, and let the air touch his hair and forehead.

He heard a door open and close in one of the houses down the line, followed by the sharp crack of a match. He could see the fitful glare of the match's light on the veranda of the quarters of the major of cavalry, and knew by the intermittent flashing and dying down of the flame that the major was lighting a cigar. In a moment he saw the old man come down the steps, into the dim light of the open night.

The major was the only man in the post for whom Captain Matt cherished a close regard. He offered no resistance to the impulse which led his feet in the direction the major was taking.

The older man paused when he heard the footfall, and knew it was not the regular step of a sentry.

"Oh! It's you, is it?" he said in recognition, when the captain was beside him. "Hang these sleepless nights! I'm getting old, I reckon. Have n't slept a wink, and thought I might get sleepy if I walked and smoked a little. Have a cigar?"

In silence Captain Matt lit the proffered cigar; then fell into slow step with his companion.

"Not much inducement to sleep, such a night as this," he said, with a final effort. "You don't see such nights in November anywhere but here in this valley."

"Oh, the night's all right, I reckon," the major assented. "But there's a time for everything. Two o'clock in the morning ought to find a healthy man with his eyes shut and his mouth open, snoring. Where you been hiding? You missed the best billiard tournament we've had in years. Billy took first place; I suppose you heard. That's because you were n't there. Have n't been sick, have you?"

This was with malice aforethought on the part of the major.

"No," Captain Matt said; "you've seen me on parade."

"Oh! So I have," the major returned. "Of course! Well, you have n't quit us, have you? We've had no end of a good time, with the boys here on duty on this last court-martial. Have you seen the detail? Some of 'em came from little Montana posts, and had n't had a chance to let themselves go loose in a big post for Lord knows when. Bully fellows, too, most of 'em. Don't know what you've missed."

The impulse was strong upon Captain Matt to talk—to open up his heart to the fullest. He knew he could find in the major deep sympathy, though it had to be dug out laboriously from beneath a crust of inconsequential levity.

"Major," he said, acting upon the impulse, "I told you once, a couple of weeks ago, something about a—girl. Do you remember?"

"Did, eh?" the major said dryly. "You've thought better of it, and want to buy me off from giving anything away?"

"No," Captain Matt said tersely; "I want to say something more."

The major relieved himself of a thick chuckle as he flicked the ashes from his cigar.

"Say," he said, "can't you come in and sit by my bed while you do your talking? I reckon maybe I might get to sleep."

Captain Matt paid no heed to this, but laid his hand upon the major's stout shoulder, and kept it there while he talked.

"I took her out with me one day," he said, "and I just let myself go and told her everything—everything about myself, I mean, and what I'd made and failed to make out of myself. I did n't say a word about my—about what I thought of her, of course. I told her just what I was, and how I'd lived, to get her idea on such things. And I got it, Major; oh, I got it! I thought she'd talk as a woman mostly does, so as to give a man a chance to dodge when something threatened to hit him. But she talked like a gatling gun. There was nothing for me to do but sit there and take it, until I was riddled through and through. Might as well have tried to dodge blue lightning. And then, just when I began to think I'd struck one of these unnatural freaks in womanhood, why, she broke down crying, just as any woman might. I've been sober ever since."

"Very affecting," the major commented heartlessly. But his cigar betrayed him. It was glowing in a succession of short, fierce puffs, and it shook as though the lips which held it were not altogether firm.

"And now, I suppose, if I'd let you, you'd say that you are very unhappy?"

"Likely, if I had the heart to say anything at all," Captain Matt agreed. "I *am* unhappy."

"Of course; of course!" said the major, but as though his thoughts were not much concerned with what he said. "Well"—after a pause—

"what business have you to concern yourself with happiness, any way, Mr. Philosopher? Don't you know happiness is only the rightful property of blind fools?" Then another very smoky interval of silence.

"Look here, Matt; you did n't tell her anything about what you thought of her?"

"No," Captain Matt said. "I thought that would n't be fair then, until she knew more about me, and I knew more about myself. Would it?"

"And she *cried*?" the major went on heedlessly. "What did you *do* when she cried?"

"Nothing," Captain Matt said. "Only waited until she got through and then came home. What was there to do?"

The major threw his cigar into the roadway and spat after it scornfully.

"Matt," he said, "if happiness is the reward of the darned fool, you certainly ought to be happy. I've got nothing more to say to you." And he stamped stoutly into his quarters.

For the rest of the night, Captain Matt walked, walked. To be called a darned fool may be to a man the elixir of life. The curt words had jarred Captain Matt broad awake, and set his thoughts flowing straight forward. It was as though the obstruction to their flow had been suddenly taken away, and the pent up flood loosed. But it was yet the middle of the night, and he had to wait for morning. So he walked, walked, walked; studying himself, and studying the line of the east for the long delayed, gray dawn. In those hours he seemed to take his first firm hold of a man's life, and found it to have three dimensions—to be something tangible and substantial. Such a man does not often pray; at least, his prayers seldom take wordy form. Captain Matt came as near prayer as he could, while he walked and waited for day, and with the first gleam of gray light his "Thank God!" had a very genuine ring in it.

He was far out upon the hills back of the post when he caught the notes of the bugles at reveillé, and the throbbing boom of the sunrise gun, rolling away and dissolving into faint and fainter echoes. "Thank God!" he said again. Never before had reveillé carried such meaning.

When he returned to the post, guard-mount was just over, and a few spectators lingered upon the sunlit benches around the parade ground. Madeline Owen was one, and she sat alone. Captain Matt walked to her side, and spoke before she knew of his presence.

"Madeline, I've something to say to you. May I sit down here?"

A wave of warm color came to her cheeks as she raised her eyes to his face. It was a strangely altered face, pale and tense with the strain of mighty self-suppression. Life and love and their full fruitage were to be won or lost; yet he did not hesitate, but plunged straightforward into the thick of hot speech.

"I've spent the time since two o'clock this morning thanking God

that I'm a man. It's true at last. I'm a man. I know it because I love you as no one but a whole man could love such a woman. And loving you has made manhood attainable to me. You need have no fear in letting me say this, because I'm not afraid of myself any more."

The eyes which looked into his were very clear and sweet and beautiful.

"No," she said quietly; "I'm not afraid."

"Say, Matt," said the post adjutant on the morning of the wedding, "what was it you said once at the club about unphilosophical fools——"

"Hush, Billy," Captain Matt cautioned. "Don't you know that one of the fixed habits of the true philosopher is to shed his outgrown ideas? It's only when a man is poverty stricken in ideas that he hates to give one up."



LATENT

BY KATE PUTNAM OSGOOD

WITHOUT the garden wall it grows,
 A flowerless tree,
 Wrung by the restless blast that blows
 Across the sea:
 Forgotten of the fickle Spring,
 The scanty leaves droop, withering:
 Scarce would it seem—poor, sapless thing!—
 A rose to be!

Yet must the frail and faded spray
 A rose remain,
 Though bitter, blowing winds to-day
 Its growth restrain.
 Somewhere, however these deny,
 The color and the fragrance lie;
 Somewhere the perfect flower its dry
 Dull stalks contain!

If in a kindlier soil perchance
 The root should grow,
 Where dews would fall, and sunbeams glance,
 And soft airs flow,
 Fair as the flower the garden shows
 The leaf might spring, the bud uncloset—
 From out the calyx of a rose
 A rose will blow!

HIS MOTHER

By Ina Brevoort Roberts

AS she prepared the room for their arrival, she puzzled a good deal over the fact that they were coming. They would start as soon as they were married. She could not understand. She had never before heard of a case like it. Coming to spend the first days of their married life in the home of the bridegroom's parents!

She and his father had talked it over when the telegram came, and had agreed that it certainly was strange. They had also been a good deal surprised at the sudden wedding, too hastily arranged to allow time for them to get there. So they, his father and his mother, had not been at their son's wedding. They had confided to each other their disappointment, but not the secret fear each held that perhaps the son's feeling was that his country parents might be out of place at a fashionable city wedding. For the bride and her family *were* fashionable; his letters had told them that, between the lines.

On the very day of the wedding had come this telegram:

Married at noon. With you for supper. Put us in my old room.

HARVEY.

His old room! They would be far more comfortable in the guest room, which was large. But Harvey loved that room he had slept in as a boy; he always insisted on sleeping there when he came on visits, though the room was hot in summer and cold in winter. Luckily this was spring—April.

While she cleaned the room, and then, after her husband and the hired man had moved the shabby furniture out and the guest-room mahogany in, straightened and arranged the place to the best advantage, she puzzled over their coming. But the more she thought about it, the less could she understand.

When everything else was ready, she brought in a big bunch of yellow flowers and placed them in a glass pitcher on the dresser.

"They will seem like a welcome in case I freeze up," she thought. "I'm going to try not to, try my very best, but I don't know. Sometimes I wonder if even God knows what a mother suffers when her only son

marries; for God is n't a mother. There, this place looks about as well as it can be made to look, all except that bare space on the mantel. I wish I had something handsome to put there. Yet, if he did n't marry, there could n't be grandchildren. Perhaps there won't be, any way. Most people don't want them nowadays."

These thoughts continued while she dressed in her best black cashmere. Her husband had brought the material for this dress on his return from one of his rare trips away. He had not known that cashmere is out of fashion, but he did know that the best was none too good for her; so the quality of the dress made up somehow for its lack of style, the soft, rich goods fell so gracefully and shone so.

She was going to lose him; he was lost already. He was married, and a son married was sometimes almost worse than a son buried. These thoughts, while not cheerful, crowded out others too bitter to be borne—thoughts of the injustice of it all, the portion allotted to a mother—a laurel wreath for her brow, loads for her tired back until she felt like a very beast of burden, and for her soul, self-sacrifice, always self-sacrifice.

She was fastening the bar enamel pin Harvey had sent the previous Easter when she heard the sound of old Legislature's footsteps and the familiar roll of carriage-wheels.

She descended the stairs, resolutely clutching at the courage that seemed to be departing with the haste and enthusiasm of a runaway child.

They came into the hall, her husband, her son, and his wife, and she was gathered into Harvey's arms. A moment later she was shaking hands with a woman who had not left girlhood very far behind her, who *was* fashionable—oh, yes, very fashionable—and not beautiful, but good to look at.

His mother's first feeling for the bride was a warm one—it was a sense of gratitude because the new arrival had not offered to kiss her. She *could* not kiss people she did not love.

Supper was got through without awkwardness; it was even a cheerful meal. His mother realized that her son's wife was to a marked degree what he called "well-bred." He was always using the word on his visits home. Doubtless this was one of the qualities he had admired in this woman he had married; certainly she had it in full measure.

As they rose from the table, the aspect of the situation subtly but unmistakably changed. Until that moment the bride's part had been—not passive; she was not the type of woman to whom that word applies, for even in response she suggested activity—not passive, but acquiescent. She had been the well-bred, receptive guest. Now it was almost as if they had all been driving together, and she had said in smooth, gentle tones, "Let me hold the reins awhile."

Before supper she had refused the mother's offer to go upstairs, saying they had bathed and made themselves tidy before leaving the train,

and the drive had seemed short. Now she turned and smiled into the eyes of her husband's mother.

"I should like to go to my room," she said. "I want to unpack some gowns that crush easily. Will you come with me? I have an idea Harvey gets his fondness for an after-dinner stroll from his father. Perhaps we can get rid of them for a time while I show you my new frocks and hats."

Silently the mother led the way upstairs. Silently she took the chair her daughter-in-law drew forward, and watched and listened while wonderful hats and gowns came forth from the trunk.

The bride lifted a creation of a marvellous shade of blue, the silk so soft and shimmering that it seemed shot with silver.

"I thought I'd wear this to church Sunday," she said. "It's the one I like best, and I do want to shine on my first appearance among the people who have known Harvey all his life."

The mother's silence deepened till it left her dumb; she could not have spoken if she had tried.

They were going to stay almost a week, then! She had never before heard of such a thing; she could not understand it.

"Are you going to spend your honeymoon *here*?" she found herself asking. Perhaps the question was rude, but it seemed out of her power to keep it back. She must get at the bottom of this mystery. Perhaps already there was something wrong between her and Harvey.

The bride left her unpacking and came to stand directly in front of her mother-in-law.

"Not quite all of it," she answered. "We're going away for just a few days before we come back to settle down."

"Come back! Settle down!" echoed his mother.

"Yes. I'll get to that presently, but first I want to ask you something——"

His mother realized that this woman's eyes looked right at you.

"Did you think it very odd, our coming here now? Because I just had to: I wanted you so. I even wanted his old belongings, because they seemed part of him, too. But most of all I wanted you. I've loved you ever since I first began to love him, almost more than I love my own mother. She gave me life, but you gave me him, and what would life be worth without him? I said to myself that perhaps we should not understand each other just at first, that possibly we would close our hearts as people so often do just when they ought to open them. But I promised myself always to remember that anything I did n't like in you was just on the surface, that under it all you were *him*. I felt that if I came to you to-day, I should n't mind so much leaving my own mother. You see, we were going to wait and have a large wedding, to please my family, but suddenly we realized that it was *our* marriage, and our right was to have it as we chose, and that life spent apart from each other was not living in

the fullest sense of the word. So we just got married and came here. You don't mind our having come, do you?"

"Mind! But most people want to get away quite by themselves for their honeymoon; they cannot seem to be alone together enough."

The bride shook her head. "We cannot be like that; we're too happy. We mortals cannot stand more than so much happiness; it would kill us. When I've been alone with Harvey for awhile I just cannot stand any more joy; I have to get away and get rid of my happiness by trying to pass it on to other people. Of course each one of us can give joy only to a few, but by turning the joy into comfort, or counsel, or inspiration, or cheer, or whatever the individual to be helped needs, it can be made to go a long way."

His mother returned the gaze of those candid gray eyes with one quite as direct.

"You are different from other women," she said.

The bride smiled, and a lovely color stormed in her face. "That is what Harvey says," she replied. "After a few days here, we'll slip away, and then we're coming back to set up housekeeping and Harvey's going to start to practise."

"Here! Give up his city practice and be a doctor here?"

"Why not? Here in his own home town, among his old friends. Surely he'd rather cure them than strangers! Of course a man who wants to grow must not vegetate, he needs the city, but we shall go there often. We're going to roam around a good deal. As Harvey says, 'A rolling stone gathers no moss, but what good is moss to a stone?' He also says that when you visit the city it gives to you; when you live in it, it takes from you. I mean to find out whether he is right. I've never lived in the country."

"But your people—how will they get on without you?" The mother was feeling swept off her feet. Her son would come back and live near her, stay close where perhaps she could see him every day! It seemed incredible.

The bride's gay laugh made a girl of her. "Oh, my people!" she cried. "I shall have them visit me in and out of season. Almost every married woman keeps her house full of her relatives, but I think a man ought to be able to go to his, so that they can sometimes have him to themselves. So when Harvey feels that he's getting more of my people than he likes, he can just run away here."

The speaker had been arranging her belongings on the dresser.

The mother was beginning to discern what the other woman had meant by saying one could have too much joy. Instead of taking her son farther away, marriage would bring him nearer. Even *this* day she had not been alone, and on the first Sunday, that she had dreaded because of its memories of a sweet-faced boy in a white sailor suit holding up his mouth

to be kissed before he hurried away to recite the Sunday-school lesson she had put into his clean little heart—this Sunday was not to be a lonely Sunday at all, but a proud day on which she would proceed up the church aisle and sit in the pew with her son and a radiant vision in moon-kissed blue. And afterward she would introduce— “This is my son’s wife; they’re spending their honeymoon with us.” Oh, it was all *too* wonderful!

The bride was taking from her trunk a good-sized, very flat package.

“I *received* so many, many lovely wedding gifts, I felt I must *give* one,” she said, “so I have brought you a present. I do not have to say, ‘I hope you will like it’; I *know* you will.”

The unwrapping disclosed a photograph of Harvey, one of those exquisitely-toned modern portraits that bring out to entire satisfaction the character and personality of the person pictured.

The mother looked long at the picture of her boy; then she laid it carefully down and went and put her arms around the other woman. They stood silently, locked in each other’s embrace. As the mother lifted her head to wipe her eyes, her glance fell on the space on the mantel that lacked something; she knew now what.

Still without speaking, she hurried away, returning in a moment with a picture of a baby. This she put into the hands of the bride.

She had its duplicate in her own bedroom, but there had never been any one to give this picture to who would care quite enough for it. So she had just kept it put away. She knew now for what purpose it had been made and saved.

The bride had forgotten her presence. She was talking to the picture, calling it foolish, loving names and now and then kissing it.

While she waited, the mother unconsciously moved toward the bed and turned down the covers and placed the pillows as she always did when Harvey was at home. When she had finished the bride was still absorbed in the picture.

It was then that inspiration came to his mother. “I’ll go down and send Harvey up,” she thought, and started on her errand, but met him just outside of the door.

“What have you done with my wife?” he asked laughingly, and would have put his arms around her but she pushed him away.

“Go in,” she said. “Go quickly; there’s a tableau you’ll want to see.”

He obeyed, and she went on downstairs and threw herself, sobbing, into her husband’s arms.

He tried to soothe her.

“Don’t, Mother; don’t. It will be easier after you get used to it. They all have to go that way. We did. And she seems pretty nice.”

“Used to it! Nice!” she repeated. “Why, John, you don’t understand. We have n’t lost him at all, and she—why, she’s the daughter I’ve always wanted!”

INCORRIGIBLE

By John Kendrick Bangs

THE Poet of Cheer sat in his library, deep in thought, while his poor wife was wrestling after the fashion of Eve with the serpents of domestic cares.

"Really, Wadsworth," the good woman said as she entered the room timidly, "I hate to disturb you, but you must do something about the coal. There is n't a scuttleful left in the cel——"

"Ah, Maria dear," said the Poet, looking up from his work, "you are just in time. Listen to this, dear:

"Now, what care I for winter's woe,
And what care I if coal be low?
I find my warmth in yonder skies,
And soothe the chill of winter's guise
By gazing into Susan's eyes,
So lustrously aglow!"

"That's very pretty, Waddy dear," said the poor woman, "but just at present there are more pressing things than poetry that must be attended to. Cook has just left us because her wages were not paid prompt——"

"That reminds me," said the Poet, smiling sweetly: "I have n't read this little thing to you that I dashed off last night:

"What though my friends have passed me by,
And left me stranded here?
What though my hearth is cold, and I
A hopeless wreck appear?
'Mid all the dread of loneliness,
And all the woes that round me press,
There's rare felicity
When Polly's smile,
So free from guile,
Like sunshine shines on me.

"Rather nice, eh?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Jinx; "but really, Wad dear, I can't smile on you with the cooking to do, and the children to wash and dress——"

"Ah, the children!" cried the Poet ecstatically. "There you hit the supremest joys of life. O ye kiddies, chickabiddies, full of joyous play! Though skies be dark, and care and cark shall linger on my way, no plaint of mine, no grievous whine, shall ever come from me whilst I can hear their laughter clear up in the nursery."

There was no answer. Mrs. Jinx had disappeared, and the Poet resumed his work. When two hours had passed and the pangs of hunger had begun to make themselves felt, the Poet rose from his desk and called:

"Maria!"

There was no answer, and the Poet repeated the call:

"Oh, Maria! I'm ready for my lu-unch!"

Still there was no reply, and the Poet walked out into the kitchen. There pinned to the icy range was a sheet of paper on which were written, in his wife's handwriting, the following lines:

Now, what care I for cark and care,
And unpaid bills 'round everywhere,
And life domestic with its snare,
Or woe that courage smothers?
When dark and dreary is the sky
I shall not weep, nor shall I sigh,
Because the Kids, and also I,
Have gone back home to Mother's!

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" said the Poet, as he read this effusion over.
"For general irresponsibility of conduct, give me a woman!"

COUNTERPARTS

BY ALICE WELLINGTON ROLLINS

"I CANNOT lure them!—I, who cannot fly!"
With listless petals on the summer air,
The drooping flower breathed a quivering sigh
For dainty butterflies that would not care.

Upon her breast a touch of velvet wings:—
Even as on the air her sigh arose,
Had come to her the restless, fluttering things,
Lured by the loveliness of her repose.

BENTLEY'S TIGER-SKIN

By Charles Wharton Stork

OF course everybody at Harvard knew it was a joke, Bentley's being hard up for money, but, then, he was constitutionally fond of jokes, and this was merely his latest. Bentley was the spoiled only son of a widowed and well-to-do mother. No doubt he was in debt, had anticipated his allowance, and could not for the moment borrow from any of his particular set—a very particular set it was, too, by the way. At all events, this was why Bentley, to add one joke to another, had decided to meet his pressing needs by auctioning the splendid tiger-skin given him by his maternal uncle, Major Archibald Hetherington, an officer of the English army in India. Bentley had been named after this uncle, and hoped to be remembered when the rich old bachelor should come to divide his fortune.

Such an exclusive event as the auctioning of Bentley's tiger-skin was not supposed to be announced to the general herd of undergraduates; nevertheless, Henry Dain got wind of it. To be sure, Dain was far from being of the general herd, but, on the other hand, he had failed to gain entrance into the famous Pentagram Fraternity, of which Bentley was a leading light. Furthermore, it happened that Dain had learned just why he had not been admitted: Bentley, who had not the slightest personal knowledge of him, had strongly opposed his election. Dain must have learned this through his friend, Chris Fallon, another paladin of the Pentagram, who had tried to get him in. Perhaps it was also through Fallon that Henry heard of the auction. At any rate, he turned up among the crowd at Bentley's room in Dunderley Hall just as the affair was beginning.

Just after lunch had been the time selected, and Gus Hawley, Bentley's room-mate, was the auctioneer. He was standing in the middle of the room, beside the famous tiger-skin, which was draped over a morris-chair. It was a superb specimen, nine feet from nose to tip of tail, of a soft golden brown color shading to pure white at the edges, the whole enhanced by thin, sharp slashings of black.

"Fifty, I am bid," Gus was saying. "Fifty dollars, gentlemen, for this magnificent tiger-skin. Sixty, did you say? Very good. Sixty! Oh, this is ridiculous, gentlemen, sixty dollars for such a skin. Feel it, gentlemen. This is no mangy Princeton tiger, but a royal Bengal, with

nine hundred and ninety-nine stripes on his body and one on his tail. Count them for yourselves if you don't believe me. Come, gentlemen, you have never seen such a skin—not a blemish on it. Shot clean through the heart the first time—you can't see the mark because the animal's heart was in his mouth at the moment."

"Sixty-five," said Dain. Several fashionable fellows looked at him in surprise, perceiving that he was not of their set; others, who knew he was not wealthy, were equally astonished at the bid. The auction continued, and Dain hung on till, after the hundred mark was passed, the advances became very slow. Even at Harvard a hundred dollars seems like a good deal of money.

"One hundred and ten! Going—going. One hundred and ten, for the third and last time."

"One hundred and fifteen."

"One hundred and fifteen! Some life in the old brute yet! Who'll make it a hundred and twenty? Going—going. Last call, gentlemen. Going—going—and gone to Mr. Dain at one hundred and fifteen dollars."

Dain handed over the results of two months' tutoring and threw the enormous hide over his shoulders, feeling that he had made something of a fool of himself. His had been the rashness of the conservative man, which breaks out the more violently from having so few opportunities. He could not have spared himself that moment of triumph over the insolent Bentley. As he went, Gus was saying to his chum:

"There's one good thing, Archie; you can buy it back any time you like. He'll always be glad to get the money."

Some months later, not long before Class Day, Henry Dain received his long-expected visit from Bentley. Truth compels us to say that Dain was somewhat disappointed in the other's manner; it was not nearly so overbearing as he had expected it to be; indeed, it was not overbearing at all. Bentley's heavy blonde handsomeness was confident but not aggressive. Strange, the mistaken preconceptions men form of each other. At the same time, the visitor was wondering at Dain's refinement. He had a lean, scholarly look, but not the least trace of the "greasy grind." The object of the call, however, was not conducive to developing friendship.

"I dropped in to see if I could get back my tiger-skin," Bentley began, glancing to where it hung on the wall between Rembrandt's "Night Watch" and Hals's "Laughing Cavalier."

"Well, I've grown quite fond of it," Dain answered guardedly.

"No doubt. But, you see, I want to have it back for Class Day. What will you take for it?" The visitor had not meant to be rudely abrupt; he had been driven to it by a certain feeling of awkwardness under the steady eye of Dain.

"What will you bid?"

"Oh, make it a hundred and fifty: that ought to be a good return on your money." Bentley was now sure the purchase had been merely a speculation.

"I won't accept it."

"Oh, come, now."

"No. On the whole, I've decided not to part with it."

"But as a favor."

"I'm not sure just what favor a man owes to another who has kept him out of a fraternity from sheer caprice."

"What do you mean?"

"You did n't even know me by sight when you opposed my election to the Pentagram. If you did, you may have your skin."

"Confound it all, Dain, I give you my word I had nothing personal against you!"

"That's just what I thought. And yet you kept me out. Now, if you think it's fair to make a special point of keeping a man you don't know out of an important club—you did n't just vote against me, you gave the impression of having a particular dislike for me—if you think that's fair, why, you can have your tiger-skin for nothing."

Bentley was completely discomfited. He felt that he was being treated hardly, yet he could not defend himself. He had not thought he was showing any rancor against Dain at the election; he had merely had a candidate of his own to propose for one of the limited number of vacancies, and had wished to keep a place open. Things were often done that way. He was not used to being called to account so strictly. It did sound mean the way Dain put it. Some such muddle of ideas was in his head, but he had never been very good at expressing himself, and the relentless logic of his host was not encouraging. He longed to cut the Gordian knot and beg pardon for having behaved badly, but the coldness of Dain's manner checked him, and the best he could say was, "If you feel that way about it, I guess I may as well go." And he went. It may perhaps seem odd that after this interview each of the two had a better opinion of the other. Such impressions come apparently from the sixth sense; whatever the cause, the result was undoubtedly as we have stated.

One afternoon in the week before Class Day a cheerful, elegant-looking youth was pacing about in Dain's little study with very evident impatience. It was Chris Fallon, one of those fortunate fellows who are clever as well as stylish, and who therefore are on the best terms with both the intellectual and the fashionable elements of the university. Just now his attention was divided between the street below and the tiger-skin, which he seemed once or twice on the point of carrying off bodily. At last, however, his waiting was rewarded, and he called out, "Come up here quick, Harry. I've been waiting for you an hour." A few moments later Dain hurried in.

"What's doing, Chris?"

"It's about that tiger-skin of Bentley's, old man. Gus Hawley told me at lunch to-day that the uncle who gave it to him is coming to his room to-day. He's an English major or something, I believe, and Bentley thinks he'll be simply wild if he finds out the skin's been sold. He's a rich old dodo, but peppery as the mischief. Archie is his favorite nephew, but there's no knowing what the old boy would do if he was offended. That was the biggest tiger he ever shot."

"Wish he'd told me that before," said Dain thoughtfully.

"Who?"

"Why, Bentley. He came here to buy it back about a week ago."

"Well, it may not be too late yet. You're here just in time. Come on, let's take it over."

"All right. Down she comes."

"That's bully of you. I didn't think you'd let the Pentagon stand in your way in a case like this."

By this time the skin was detached from the wall, and the two lost no time in piling it on their shoulders and rushing down into the street. As they ran along with their conspicuous burden exposed to the public view, they soon found themselves at the head of a procession. Small boys, starting up from nowhere, yelled, "Gee! Get on to de tiger!" Idle freshmen dashed out to laugh at them, fair maidens followed at a distance, even a white-haired professor diverted his stroll to see the upshot of the matter.

"Suppose the Major sees us coming," panted Harry, as they hove in sight of Dunderley.

"Have to risk it now," snorted Chris, over his shoulder. "I told Gus to be on the watch for us."

As they neared the door in the midst of their troop, a large carriage was driving away.

"The deuce! We're too late, after all!" exclaimed Chris as they stopped at the entrance. Gus was waiting in an agony.

"Too bad! He's just gone in."

"That is hard luck. We came as fast as we could. Dain only got back five minutes ago."

"See here, fellows," Harry struck in, "can't we get it up yet? His window's open. Yell to Bentley to drop the rope of his fire-escape."

"That's an idea!" Gus chuckled. "The uncle only went in this minute, just before you came round the corner, and the elevator's sure to be at the top story."

"Hello, Archie-ee!"

"Yes. What is it, Chris?"

"We've just brought your skin over. Drop your life-rope and pull it up before you let your uncle in."

Though awkward of speech, Bentley, as a foot-ball man, could think and act quickly. In two seconds the rope was lowered, the skin was inserted in the loop, and half a minute later it was pulled up, flapping and dangling, amid the cheers of the delighted, though mystified, populace.

Almost immediately afterward, Bentley was apologizing to his uncle for keeping him waiting at the door. "You see, Uncle, I was just fixing up the room a little." Major Hetherington, assuring him that it had n't been a minute, entered in high spirits, followed by Archie's mother and his younger sister, Grace, whose presence in the party no one of our actors had yet seen fit to mention.

"Ah, there he is!" exclaimed the Major, going to the tiger-skin the moment he entered the room. "How well I remember the night I potted him! You don't usually keep him on the floor, I hope?"

"Oh, dear, no, Uncle. He's never been there before to-day—for your visit, you know."

Major Hetherington was a typical specimen of the handsome British officer, red of face and hearty of manner. His volubility suggested a temper sometimes choleric, but at present he was the soul of good humor.

"So friendly the boys are here!" he remarked. "I heard them cheering outside just a moment after I arrived. I'm afraid our English lads would n't have been enthusiastic enough for that."

"You see, Uncle, we don't often have a chance to cheer an English officer," explained Archie.

When the Major looked out into the street, where most of the crowd were still loitering, his imposing presence elicited another cheer, which made him beaming more than ever.

Ten minutes later friends began to arrive, including a chaperon and several girls, for Archie had arranged a moderate spread for the occasion. Among the rest was Chris Fallon, who soon contrived to get a few words aside with the host.

"Do you know, Archie, I think it was pretty decent of Dain to bring around that skin. It was his idea, too, about pulling it up from outside."

"It saved me, all right. I hate to think what the Major would have said if he had n't seen it. That certainly was decent of Dain. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll run over and ask him in, Gus. You can look after things here for a minute."

The result of this was that in about ten minutes Bentley returned with the owner of the tiger-skin. His mission had not been achieved without opposition, but the genuine good-comradeship which had made him so widely popular soon prevailed over Dain's reluctance. The new arrival was promptly presented to Major Hetherington and the ladies, and was made to feel as much at ease as possible. It thus happened that he found himself seated on a sofa beside a slender, quiet-looking girl, who had been introduced to him as Miss Bentley.

"Are you the Mr. Dain who writes for the *Advocate*?" she began as soon as they had gotten settled.

"I'm afraid I must plead guilty. None of the other Dains go in for verse."

"Oh, but I'm sure you ought to be proud of 'Leander.' I thought it was charming, so picturesque and musical."

"Well, I think 'Leander' was better than most of my stuff."

"I wonder Archie never spoke of you. The last time he was home I mentioned your name, and he knew at once who you were, but I did n't gather that you were at all intimate."

"Well, the truth is, we have n't been intimate very long. . . . Bentley is your brother, then?"

"Why, of course. Don't we look alike?"

Dain observed her more carefully, finding it incidentally a very pleasant process. Her white dress and delicate features stood out against the dark furnishings of the room. It mattered little to Harry that they were surrounded by a jostling crowd: he had always the poet's power of isolating anything that interested him from everything that did not.

"Yes, you do look like him," Harry said at last, suppressing the most important part of his conclusions. The fact was that, though pretty and of a blonde complexion, Grace was very different from her brother. In contrast to his air of physical superiority, she had inherited from her mother the subdued voice and repose of manner of an English girl, which did not, however, prevent her from having the sparkle of an American debutante. Harry found her charming, especially her sincerity and easy directness.

"I'm glad you see it," she continued. "Archie is exactly my ideal of one kind of man. Of course I'm just the opposite myself. He likes athletics and society, and I'm fond of nature and music and books. I really did n't expect to meet any literary friends of his."

Harry did not explain how recent the friendship had been, and Grace came back to the subject of "Leander." What compliment is more irresistible for an author than to have his favorite poem cited with praise? Soon these two, oblivious of the rest, were deep in discussion over all the important things of life. They discovered that neither of them cared for society as an end in itself, that both were devoted to music, that both believed poetry should be uplifting and not merely beautiful, that both were firmly convinced that only those congenial in tastes should marry. This was doing pretty well for a first conversation, but of course they did not realize the logical conclusion toward which their thoughts were travelling.

When at last, after the fifth description of how he shot the tiger, Major Hetherington insisted on departing, Dain quickly arranged to see something of Miss Bentley during the approaching festivities. He took a

most cordial farewell of Archie, and went back to his room, inwardly revolving many things.

Mrs. Bentley and Grace remained after the Major's departure, as the family had arranged to dine together at the Union. It was then that Archie first had a chance to say a few words to his sister.

"Well, Gracie, which one of the fellows did you get along with best?"

"Oh, I was talking nearly all the time with Mr. Dain."

"Really! What did you make of him?"

"I think he's the most interesting man I ever met," she replied thoughtfully.

"He's a very *original* fellow, I dare say," proceeded Archie, giving a peculiar accent to "original," as if it were a rather dubious quality.

"Oh, extremely. I wonder a little how you happened to be intimate with him."

"It was partly an accident." At this moment he was regarding the tiger-skin at his feet, but he did not explain further.

"Well, anyhow, it was a very *nice* accident," Grace concluded; which was undoubtedly true.

LORDLING LOVE AND LADY FAIR

A MAN is known by the company he keeps; a woman, by the company she avoids.

Jessie E. Henderson

A GIRL of twenty judges a married man by his treatment of her; a girl of thirty by the way he treats his wife.

Ann M. Walker

A WOMAN may be a mystery to a man and to herself, but never to another woman.

A. C. Dixon

SMART people never entertain angels unawares: they ask a few friends to meet them.

R. G. Sutherland

THE road to the graveyard is paved with successful operations.

R. N. Price, Jr.

THERE is no discount on the cost of experience.

L. B. Coley

THE BOOK OF HIS YOUTH

By Harriet Joor

THE chill of early morning yet lingered in the high, breeze-swept scriptorium, though April sunshine wrought pale arabesques upon the gray, flagged floor, and Brother Francis shivered as he waited by the cupboard of supplies for his allotment of parchment and colors, and his hand shook as it drew the fallen cowl more closely about his throat.

Those long, nervous hands, deep-veined and shrunken like rose-geranium leaves, always trembled now, save when brush or pen lay in their clasp to steady them; and the covertly watchful faces of the men about him changed subtly, like running water under shade and shine, as the tall, spare form made its way to the table by the window,—pity, and fear, and sullen malice for that one moment peering out all unabashed from the lattice of the soul. For to-day even the dullest might see that Francis was growing old, and the exigent master-illuminator was more feared than loved by his fellow workers.

Nathaniel, alone, smiled greeting, noting, as the elder man paused at his desk, a strange, absent look in the sunken eyes that were wont to gleam so sharply from their shadowy caverns; but when he would have spoken the old artist had slipped on silently to his own place.

As the morning hours wore on, Francis, with the habit of a lifetime, bent patiently above his parchment sheet, while the shrunken fingers, unflinching, drew fine vermilion lines about a foliated capital, and washed in the shimmering background; but far-away voices, that his brothers could not hear, were calling to him from green sunlit ways, and the lure that had quickened his boyish pulse lay once more upon his spirit.

For in the night, as sometimes happens to the old, his boyhood had come flooding back from the hidden places of memory, blurring the later years with all their pride of achievement, and dimming the faces of his brothers.

Feverishly he paused, drawing an unsteady hand across his sunken temples, then resolutely dipped his brush once more into the color-box. But memories kept tugging at his heart.

He was a boy again, gathering bramble-berries with his sister at the

edge of the stubble-fields, and a sparrow-hawk was wheeling and dipping in the blue sky, while the sound of sheep-bells came faintly across the downs, and the scent of bean-flowers drifted by on the warm air.

There must be strawberries ripening in the copse beyond the village, and his sister—— But it was too early for berries, and his sister—an old, gray woman, heavy with years—had died last Michaelmas!

Suddenly he thrust the painted sheet sharply from him, and stepped to the mullioned window. A young vine-spray had wandered over the sill, and his fingers caressed it absently as he gazed across the sunny meadows.

Then, with unseeing eyes, unconscious of the startled glances that followed him, the old man went slowly from the room, and down the stone stairs hollowed by a century of passing feet.

Dimly, as sounds heard in a dream, the voices of the novices at school in the eastern cloister came to him, as he crossed the open court; then, with the closing of the wicket, came silence once more, and sunshine, and the long shadows of the limes, with the green of blossoming pastures stretching beyond.

For so many years the old craftsman had bent, self-centred, above the painted flowers on his page, that he had forgotten how God's flowers grew; and now, as pictures of his boyhood came drifting back with the sunshine and the April winds, he looked out on earth and sky with a child's new-washed vision, while deep in his soul there awoke a hunger for the old lost fellowship with his kind.

There were children at play in the abbey meadows—little, brown-limbed peasant children, who looked askance at the brother's wrinkled face, and shrank from the hand stretched out to them in wistful overture.

Many of the monks they knew by sight: sharp-visaged Anastasius, whom they feared, and Nathaniel, whose smile was like the coming of the spring, and gaunt Jerome with the tender voice, whom they loved, in famine-time, to find as almoner at the gate.

But to Francis, living his life of dreams, the existence of the poor without the abbey walls was as some jarring tale read long ago, that he would fain forget, lest his vision of the beautiful be dimmed; and when it came his turn to give out alms at vesper-time, he had shrunk from the hungry, insistent faces at the wicket, and withdrawn into the shadow of his cowl, so the children who had peered from their mothers' skirts knew him not; and now, when he sought gropingly for his lost share of the old warm human heritage, these little ones looked on him with stranger-eyes.

But his hunger would not be denied, and he wooed them cunningly, with wonderful tales that his mother had told to him long ago, while the flames made elfish shadows in the dusk—tales he and his

sister had whispered over again, with delicious tremors, as they huddled close in the creaking truckle-bed. Not classic legends of knight or saint, such as he had set in frames of jewelled color through all the years of his manhood, but bits of pagan lore, treasured in the memory of the common folk, and that he had long forgotten, but which came singing back to him, to-day, with the touch of the crisp spring winds and the sound of children's voices.

Then shyly the little ones drew near, confiding to him their names for the flowers at their feet—and they were the very same names that he and his sister had called them by of old!

To these children, too, the daffodils that overspread the meadow with cloth-of-gold were "golden-candle-sticks"—candlesticks more beautiful than the precious seven-branched one of the Hebrew temple, the old monk thought, as his eyes, new-opened, dwelt upon their swaying grace; for them, too, as for the little lad and lass of long ago, cowslips grew in all the marshy stretches to be bound into fragrant balls; and for them the bowl of the buttercup was freshly varnished and glistening, as if continually wet with dew, and for their delight the tiny blue speedwell shone under the hedges, whose buds even now were swelling toward their blossom-time.

The sun was mid-high in the cloudless April heavens, and the shadows of the limes had shrunken to round dark mats about their roots, when Francis returned to the unfinished page on the desk beside the window—that beautiful deep mullioned window, in whose carven cornice, his quickened vision noted now, sparrows were already beginning to build.

Because he had glimpsed once more his long-lost portion of the common life, it was to him as though all things were made anew. Yet, strangely, he now first realized that he was growing old, so that he toiled the more eagerly to complete this task and begin another that was calling insistently upon his hand and heart.

So many books he had made for others—let him make one, just one, for the satisfying of his own soul, ere the brush slipped forever from his grasp, the old artist prayed—forgetting the power and the glory that were his—that queens shrined his painted Psalters in velvet and pearl, and kings bartered their jewels for his handiwork.

Day after day he labored tirelessly on—through early mornings, when the dawn shone red between the wet grape leaves, and through long afternoons when the shadow of leaf and stem lay sharp upon the stone.

Yet, afterward, the other workers remembered an unwonted patience in the master, even in this time of breathless haste, and those who had used to cringe under his glance marvelled to find a yearning gentleness in the sunken eyes that scanned their work, and marvelled yet more at words of kindly encouragement.

"That is good color, lad—clean, and pure, and jewel-like;" or, "Thy stroke is growing more steady, Brother, thy eye more true."

For it was no longer Francis, first illuminator in the kingdom, intolerant of the least imperfection, who gazed on their crude attempts—but a wistful old man, whose youth had come drifting back to him from some far, mysterious port of the soul, and who saw again in their unskilled efforts the blundering essays of his own boyish endeavors—the tentative gropings of a spirit that outsoars the untutored hand.

The young leaves of the vine were yet ruddy and touched with down when Francis began his labor of love—a Book of Hours, on whose broad margins glimpses of his long-lost boyhood and youth were to shine forth in radiant beauty.

As the volume slowly grew, the monks about him were amazed to see upon the painted page no symbol of the saints—no lion of St. Mark's nor crook of the Shepherd of men, no miniature of the Coming of the Magi or of the home at Nazareth, no sign of Virgin or of martyr. And some were dumbly troubled to find gleaming there naught but vistas of lowly peasant life, and homely country happenings; and others, seeing, dreamt again, they knew not why, of far-off homes and friends, and walked more softly after, and spoke more gently, for the message of the painted page.

On one margin, in a mesh of sea-weed, curved the fair volutes of an ocean shell, pink-lipped and delicately arched, such as the boy Francis had held to his ear to hear the mermaid's song. On another, a whirl of blue waters gleamed, with a drift of white blossoms upon its breast—a memory of far-off springs, when broken fruit-flowers drifted by on swollen meadow streams.

Here a tangle of hawthorn wreathed in a glowing letter, and the monk's lips smiled, as his pencil wrought, at thought of the Mayings long ago.

On one page spears of golden wheat glowed against a purple ground, and a wistful look crept into his sunken eyes as the brother bent low above the parchment—for it was the shining cornfields of his home that he saw swaying in rhythmic waves before the wind.

On many a margin wild grape-stems twisted like writhing serpents beneath a canopy of leaves and purple fruit; and again and again, about title and border and tall capital letter, he drew the wistful out-reaching tendrils of the vine. Such had he seen of old when the grape-gatherers, with joyous vintage songs, plied their happy task on terraced hill-slope and low-lying meadow.

There, too, upon the mellow parchment glowed the flowers he had known and loved of old—homely cottage posies. Mary's golden flower, many-rayed like the sun, and tall foxgloves where the bees had hummed through drowsy far-off summer noons, and scarlet poppies with petals

of crumpled silk that the boy Francis had used to smooth between finger and thumb, as children fondle a velvet fold.

There shone round-eyed, pink-tipped gowans, like the chubby faces of children, and dog-roses, red and white, that grow on wayside briers, and trailing sprays of crumpled blackberry bloom, the blue of the periwinkle and the fringed corn-flower, and the wild strawberry's coral cone.

And amid all the intricate tracery, in fine-wrought miniatures, with background of purple, or blue, or gold, the old craftsman portrayed the story of the year, month by month, as the country boy had seen the seasons unfold—a painted calendar of simple homely happenings.

Pictures of sowing and reaping, of threshing, and gathering in of the harvest—of hawking and hunting of the wild boar—of Maying and Yule-tide festivals, and feasts of sheep-shearing and vintage-time; in quaint vignette the life to which his boyish pulse had thrilled of old lived again in deathless beauty on his page.

All was fair in that earlier time as the old man lived it over again; the bitter things had been washed away by the tender years, and the pain that had driven the young soul to this quiet haven was long since forgotten—it was of the pride and the joy and the strength of youth that the old man sang, as old men must ever do; of its big dreams but not of its big unrest.

Had his brothers known it, his very heart lay bared upon the parchment—the sensitive heart of boyhood with its passionate hopes, and dauntless courage, and deathless loyalties; but the men who gazed with puzzled eyes upon the shimmering leaves breathed in, unwittingly, the fragrance of childish memories and the swift-fleeting gossamer visions of youth, and knew not the message they brought.

"'Tis but the common life of man ye have painted, and in such, surely, is no profit to men's souls," the armarian protested in blunt disappointment, voicing the unspoken thought of many of his fellows.

"But was it not the common life of man Christ lived while He tarried here?" Francis gently questioned.

But when Nathaniel, whose spirit was nearest akin to the master's, stood alone at his side, the old man turned to him with a passion of futile pain and yearning.

"'Tis the Book of my Youth, lad, and they sense it not—the Book of my Youth—that fairest thing God ever gives to man!"

The Easter season was at hand when Francis began his Book of Hours, and the autumn days were nigh when he drew the last finial.

Pondering wistfully with what words he should write "finis" to his task of love, he went softly forth into the twilit garth, where a mavis was faintly chanting its fitful autumnal note among the darkening cherry boughs.

The old artist smiled up at its shadowy covert, his heart a-brim with new-born tenderness for all young things and their joy.

"Dost thou, little brother, serve God with thy song of gladness, even as I lay at His feet the book of my youth?"

Then, stooping, he stroked the dim faces of the ragged October blossoms at his knee.

"And you, my brothers, is your fragrance the gift you send to God, even as I would bind into a sheaf for Him the fragrant memories of youth?"

Two monks shuffling down the dusky walk saw him bend above the flowers, and paused to wonder at their brother's foolish ways—then, smiling indulgently, pattered on along the darkening path.

That night, in the half-waking between two sleeps, the motto he had sought came to the old artist:

"Finis succrevit, manus et mea fessa quievit."

"I will write it in the morning," murmured the old craftsman drowsily, as he turned, smiling, on his pallet.

But ere dawn the Angel of Life, whom men, mistakenly, call Death, wrote "finis" in the Book of the Earthly Hours of Brother Francis.

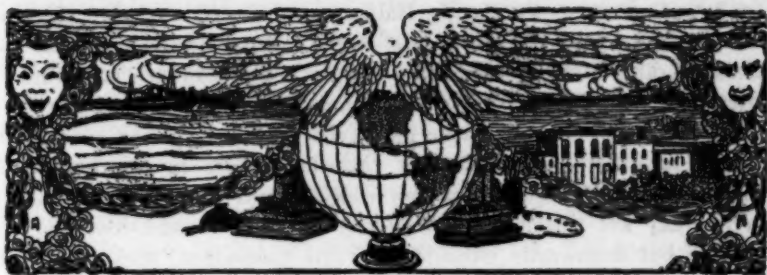


AS DAYS GO DOWN THE WEST

BY MARION MANVILLE

AS days go down the west, and tender stars
 All rimmed about with heavens blue come forth
 And set their light-ships in the trackless sea
 Whose highways stretch away from south to north,
 I think how days have risen in the east
 And flashed like meteors from hill to hill,
 Set full of sunny hours, till evening came
 To close them like rose-petals soft and still.

And that my work but poorly hath been done,
 And that my day in idleness hath set,
 With saddened eyes I look into the west
 And watch it pass away with keen regret.
 Those precious moments lost in dreaming mood,
 Those perfect hours forever past me by!—
 Small wonder that new stars are blurred with tears,
 And old days wafted heavenward with a sigh.



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

THE THIRD ITALY

THROUGH patient centuries Italy has permitted herself to be exploited by all the nations of the world for their education in the arts and the sentiments. But she has tired of the interference of sentimental foreigners who seem not to know that there is a third Italy to succeed the Italy of the Cæsars and the Italy of the Renaissance. The men who are working out the destinies of a great people are not pleased that fifty years after her redemption Italy should still be the land of blue skies and nightingales, where Baedekered travellers may brood in reverie over vestiges of Roman walls and mediæval monasteries and Renaissance churches, with a vague regret that they had not applied themselves more vigorously in the days of passionate hatred for the dates and names that were History. Some time ago, the militant Mayor of Rome, undeterred by the aura attaching to the names of Maurice Hewlett and Vernon Lee and Edith Wharton and Arthur Symons, wrote an open letter to the Director of the British School of Archæology at Rome, in which he uncorked the vials of his wrath at writers whose noses are buried in the thirteenth century, and who refuse to listen to the bell of a trolley-car in the ancient and hilly cities of Umbria. To them whatever is mediæval is beautiful. They have drunk lightly at all the magic sources of history and art, and their esthetic souls bleed when they see *l'antica madre* answering the calls of the twentieth century. To them, all the social and economic achievement of a new-born nation is neutralized by the crime against Art of putting statues of Cavour and Garibaldi

in bronze and unspeakable trousers on all the piazzas of Italy, within sight of the sacred sculptures of Mino da Fiesole and Nicolo Pisano.

Like their romantic friends, Italians admire what was admirable and beautiful in "The Venice of the Doges" and "The Tuscany of the Strozzi" and "The Rome of the Borgias," but they are not blind to what was ugly and detestable in tyranny and superstition and cruelty. They too find beauty in their handsome ancestors, posing perennially young in graceful doublets and varicolored hose in the foreground of Renaissance frescoes. But they consider that the demands of a different day are better fulfilled in the less artistic sack-coat and the prosaic but democratic trousers. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the seal of the famous publishing house of Zanichelli of Bologna bears the motto *Laboravi fidenter*, and the figure of a man sowing the fields under the rays of the rising sun. And though he sows by hand in the ancient fashion and shows a motto in the ancient tongue, he is dressed in the manner of the twentieth century. The third Italy has discarded the outworn garments of mediævaldom and has woven herself new garments of new fabrics fit for the use of as lively and stimulating a nation as any the world has ever known.

BEULAH B. AMRAM

MORNING EYES

WHEN one rides in the elevated and looks across the car at a miscellaneous row of his fellow men and women, the conclusion is forced upon him, that the world, once so fresh and young, has become middle-aged; for upon no face along the line is contentment impressed, unless a child be present—and of him you see only a rear view. He alone is looking delightedly out upon the world to see what's a-doing. Every one else is dull, or bored, or anxious.

By middle age, contentment has become an ancient virtue, as much to be cast off as last year's clothing. In the general hubbub and hurry of effort and strain the good old virtue has become threadbare. Getting and spending, between them, grind away its shining freshness as remorselessly as the upper and the nether millstones deal with the grain between. Time was when contentment was, indeed, both shining and fresh; but it was morning then, when we looked out fearlessly and without prejudice. By noon our eyes have grown weary; their zest has flown. They are dulled with much sharp peering, with questioning, ennui, distrust.

May not a virtue grow old and worn with honorable service? Surely. But that it should go out of fashion is unforgivable. There are so few virtues, at best—only seven according to those who would offset each of the deadly sins and have nothing left over—that it is hard to spare one.

But if rapid progress is the end and aim of being, what so shabby as contentment, which does indeed hinder that end and aim? Dekker sang of Sweet Content, rhyming it neatly with the *punishment* of the restless spirit that never knew the *jam satis* feeling. Shakespeare, too, was of the opinion that "our content is our best having." Poor simple belief of past generations! And there's Charles Lamb, chief exponent of contentment, who, climbing down at the day's end from his office stool and wending his way home to a quiet evening at cribbage with his faithful sister, finds so warm and serene an atmosphere there, so restful and unhurried, that he must needs voice his quiet satisfaction. "I would be content to go on in that idle folly forever," he says half-apologetically, and doubtless smiling whimsically to himself. "The pipkin should be ever boiling to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over; and as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be ever playing." Was ever such an old-fashioned fool? Alexander, weeping for more worlds to conquer, was infinitely more modern than this.

And yet, what is contentment but the viewing of the world with morning eyes? Lamb had such eyes, happy and unspoiled, to his death, and peradventure beyond. Shakespeare is unthinkable without them. What of you? You have not forgotten, have you, the days when the snail was a dragon and the yew tree's whispering was thick with wizardry? When a broken prism filled the world with rainbows? When every pink-eyed rabbit popped down a hole into Wonderland? When summer, brimming in the poppy's cup, stood at lip-level that your thirsty soul might drink and be satisfied? When a thousand mysteries, yet fresh with dew, hung within eye-compass? When you had upon the tip of your tongue the *open sesame* to a myriad marvels? When you stood heart-deep in a divine contentment because "the world was so full of a number of things"? Wonder, and worship, and a simple joy, were yours when you looked at life. But now the rainbows, broken and confused, lie on a bargain-counter; and the rabbits, hutch-bound, can do no more than eat and breed. The charm is gone; the *open sesame* lost. Our noonday eyes, restless and peering, are ever on the search for something we have n't got!

Browning, being impatient of many things, cried, "Had I God's leave, how I would alter things!" Yet he knew very well he had n't God's leave. Omar, too, would gladly have remoulded this sorry scheme of things nearer to his heart's desire. Omar, too, recognized the impossible when he had stated it. But there is a possible. By God's leave, we may continue to look through eyes that, being content with the glory of the sum of things, demand no alterations beyond our reach. By God's leave, we may carry our morning eyes into noonday, into twilight—into the very Dark.

HELEN COALE CREW

"THE FIGHTING EDGE"

THE phrase from which our title springs sticks persistently. By "The Fighting Edge" is meant, of course, aggression—the get-it-all-anyhow habit. That men who lack this quality are the losers in life, many declare—but more deny. According to one's viewpoint, one measures values and distances. If in business and the crafts, eternal aggression is needed, correspondingly is the absence of that quality—beatific in equally vital things, like love, marriage, and motherhood.

To be too keen-set invites suspicion. Not only does the chance-grabber at once become his own handicap, but through hurry he often loses a cause or an opportunity that might have been his, had he adopted smoother tactics.

History teaches us that tact and warfare are ever at dagger-points. If Aggression has had her victories, Tact has doubled them, and more. To become one's "own man" is strong; to assert oneself without wrath is fine; but to refuse to profit at the price of another's rightful due is big.

Honors deserved rarely are delayed in transit. In spite of cynics, this world is quick to give merit precedence. A man who fears to speak when his principles are being vilified, or in behalf of one maligned, or for his own just due, is a spineless creature, pitiful to watch.

Self-appreciation and egotism are not even foster-kin. No horn is so tinny as one blown by an egotist, and to pull a verbal trigger before the hat drops is crass, if not knavish.

Though the rich man may, the Big man never crowds the little fellows, and the Great man is quickest to uncover before others whom he rates as "Big."

If it takes a malefactor to catch his kind, equally canny is greatness to discover its peer.

More Waterloos have come from too much than too little self-confidence. An inflated ego soon bursts, for it is a bubble that lacks substance, and hence cannot endure.

Nothing is more impressive than modesty in a Great Personage; and a Great Personage is nothing if not Modest. Supermen alone can bear their own banners. Those who lag behind in the Marathons of Goals care little for Place. Power to them spells anything but place. Others are better pleased to do their little well, than to do big things badly.

The danger of the "Fighting Edge" is, it cannot be left at the office or in one's locker. It must be worn at home, because it is not a garment, but a habit. Hence those who are least able to carry its scimitar thrusts suffer most keenly.

Its verbal manifestation is known as a chronic grouch. In the presence of the august Fighter, words must be measured, children hushed, phrases edited, and laughter stilled. Hence what might have been "The House of Fineness" becomes the dwelling of an Autocrat whose edge will not come off. Whether worldly Success pays for an aggressive habit, is a question purely personal or—marital.

MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM

UNMORAL AND IMMORAL

ARE you unmoral or immoral? Do not answer too quickly, for if you are only unmoral, we may be able to overlook it. Unmoral stands to immoral in much the same relation as unregenerate stands to degenerate. If you commit some act of which the arbiters of ethics disapprove, the category that you go in all depends on whether the arbiters have previously brought the ethical constitution and by-laws to your notice. If they have already told you that a certain thou-shalt-not exists, then you are immoral if you disobey it. If, however, you are still in an untaught state of sheer savagery, then you are merely unmoral, and, instead of being the victim of execration and contumely, you are entitled to all the emoluments and perquisites of any other savage. Ignorance of the civil or criminal law excuses no one, but ignorance of the moral law does count for a little these discriminative days.

E. O. J.

CASH AS A BIOLOGIC FACTOR

THERE is always something to worry about—a condition evidently designed for some beneficent purpose. As Father Gregory once hinted, "Peradventure this world here is made troublesome unto us, lest we be delighted by the way and forget whither we are going." At all events, a present cause for worry is the evidence presented by unshakable figures that the birth rate of civilization is steadily going down. Just now the chief excitement on this score centres in Germany. Germany has long been distinguished as the most prolific of nations, but recent statistics show that the birth rate there is now declining so rapidly that by 1920 it will fall below that of France.

Of course the wisacres are ready always to tell us why this is thus. City life, economic stress, equal suffrage, and several other latter-day conditions are ascribed as the cause. Incidentally also, by way of confirming our pessimism, we are assured that at the present moment there are in the United States more than seventeen million men and women

of marriageable age who are not married. Altogether, the prospect is extremely gloomy.

A century ago the gloom was on the opposite horizon. Mr. Malthus and his disciples had at that time convinced the timorous world that population was increasing so rapidly that within a few generations there would be more children than the earth could support. And all sorts of measures—some of them most unholy—were seriously recommended as a means of checking the increase.

To-day the chief business of those who believe themselves commissioned to assist the Almighty in regulating the affairs of creation is to devise plans for increasing the birth rate. A tax on bachelors appears to be the most popular suggestion, and the most likely. It stands to reason that a man would rather marry and make some woman unhappy than pay ten dollars a year into the state treasury. It is a well known biological fact that a man will do anything to avoid the payment of taxes; and why should not a shrinking community avail itself of this natural law for the purpose of repairing its population?

Then, there is the premium on motherhood. This has many earnest advocates. Already Colorado, France, Australia, and several other commonwealths are preparing to make actual trial of this often-urged expedient. The theory is that for a money consideration the married women of civilization will be more willing to bear children than they appear to be at present. Australia proposes an allowance of twenty-five dollars to the mother of every new-born baby. France is considering a proposition to give the mother one hundred dollars for each child in excess of three. This is equivalent to twenty-five dollars apiece for the first four.

The thought of bringing babies into the world for cash does not, of course, lend itself to poetry or lullabies. And it is not intended to. This is a serious, practical matter. At the same time, however, when it is remembered that the decline in the birth rate is confined almost wholly to the intelligent and the comparatively well-to-do, it may be questioned whether twenty-five or even a hundred dollars will prove sufficiently attractive to overcome the scruples of such families against a numerous progeny. It may, perhaps, prompt the poor and inefficient families to a more industrious compliance with the Biblical command to be fruitful and multiply, but is this the sort of multiplication we want to encourage?

There is, indeed, a growing sentiment that if the State is to meddle in affairs of this kind, it had better confine its energies to the enacting of laws designed to secure the breeding of only healthy, normal, and efficient children. Society is now rapidly reaching the point where human quality is immeasurably to be preferred to human quantity. And, moreover, if the declining birth rate is an indication of the approaching extinction of the human race, no cash bonuses will suffice to thwart the intent of Providence.

CLIFFORD HOWARD